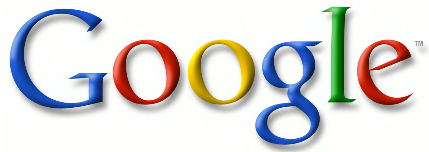

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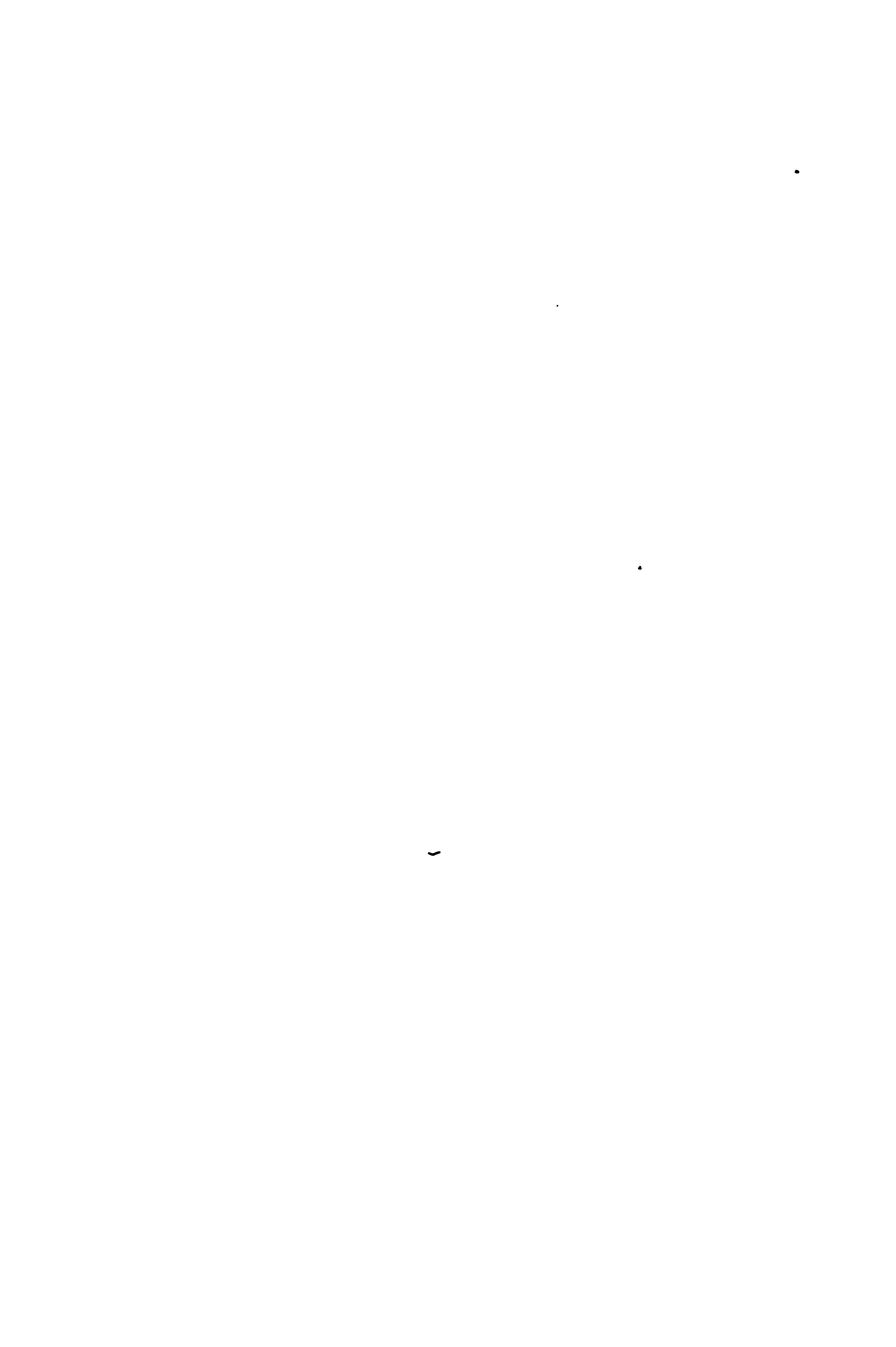

THE

IMPEACHMENT OF MARY STUART

AND OTHER PAPERS

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THE

IMPEACHMENT OF MARY STUART

SOMETIME QUEEN OF SCOTS

AND

OTHER PAPERS

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL

"IN DEFENCE!"

BY

JOHN SKELTON

ADVOCATE

AUTHOR OF 'NUGÆ CRITICÆ,' 'A CAMPAIGNER AT HOME,' ETC.

WITH A DESIGN FOR A PORTRAIT OF MARY STUART
BY SIR J. NOEL PATON, R.S.A.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCLXXVI

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TO SIR J. NOEL PATON, R.S.A., AN ILLUSTRIOUS INTERPRETER OF SCOTTISH SONG AND SHAKESPERIAN ROMANCE, THIS VOLUME OF APOLOGIES IS INSCRIBED, BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND, THE AUTHOR.

THE HERMITAGE OF BRAID,
1st Oct. 1875.

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ERRATA.

Page 49, line 17, *for* "other" *read* "others."

" 54, line 17, *for* "wrote" *read* "write."

" 130, line 8, *for* "scared" *read* "scarred."

" 164, line 21. "Neither in these inventories," &c. I find that there is *one* bequest to Bothwell—there being about twenty-five to Darnley. The matter, however, is of no moment.

Page 192, line 21. This expression is alleged to have been used on another occasion.

Page 213, line 15, *for* "Reginis" *read* "Reginæ."

JOHN DRYDEN

"Dryden taught to join
The varying verse, the full-resounding line,
The long majestic march, and energy divine."

POPE: *Imitations of Horace.*

"Dryden in immortal strain
Had raised the Table Round again,
But that a ribald King and Court
Bade him toil on, to make them sport;
Demanded for their niggard pay,
Fit for their souls, a looser lay,
Licentious satire, song, and play;
The world defrauded of the high design
Profaned the God-given strength, and marr'd the lofty line."

SIR WALTER SCOTT: *Introduction to Marmion.*

JOHN DRYDEN.

JOHN DRYDEN stands in the foremost rank of English satirists. He is the most forcible and masculine of English poets. For sheer downright intellectual strength we must seek his fellow among the great philosophers and divines,—not among poets. His justice of judgment, variety of faculty, felicity of diction, splendour of invective, have rarely been matched. It is true that the finer and more delicate forms of the imagination did not visit him; his keen, observant eye failed to detect their difficult beauty; his ear was deaf to their haunting music. Yet even in his infirmities we have been used to regard him as a not unworthy representative of the English type of character, —unideal, yet manly, sagacious, affectionate, indifferently honest.

To Lord Macaulay, however, John Dryden was a man many degrees worse than his fellow-men. The Whig historian pursued the Tory

poet with a peculiar energy of dislike. It cannot be said, perhaps, that this hostility is calculated to do its object much permanent injury. Lord Macaulay is immensely popular with the masses, and many able men are unable to resist the charm of his diligent rhetoric and fluent logic; but the violent contrasts of light and shade to which he habitually resorts are distasteful to the critical and somewhat colourless spirit of the time, and the men who mould the opinion of the future are little, if at all, under his influence. These men—going, it may be, to the root of the matter, yet too often brusque, arrogant, and paradoxical—are indisposed to surrender their independent judgments and their individual convictions to the guidance of any leader, and least of any to the guidance of one who occasionally sacrifices minute truthfulness to broad and striking effects, who divides so sharply the tangled motives of men, who is so constantly clever, ingenious, luminous, animated, picturesque, but who lacks, as they fancy, the subtle insight and curious cunning of the true interpreters of human nature. The fame of John Dryden,—"that noble old English lion," as Thackeray called him,—is probably safe enough: in the meantime, however, it may be worth our while to note how, and in what respects, Lord Macaulay's portrait of the great satirist is inadequate and misleading.

But this cannot be adequately accomplished until we have realised, more or less clearly, the character and the circumstances of the society in which he was placed.

The literary public of England in the seventeenth century was a limited and a peculiar one. At present every popular work circulates from John-o'-Groat's to the Land's End. Readers and writers are to be found in every part of the kingdom, and our literature is addressed, not to a sect or a coterie, not to a Dorset or a Buckingham, but to the educated intelligence of a whole people. But it was not so two hundred years ago. To all intents and purposes the men who dwelt between Whitehall and the Tower constituted the English world of the *belles-lettres* at the Restoration. "To go about," says Vanbrugh, "to excuse half the "defects that this abortive brat is come into the "world with, would be to provoke *the town* with "a long preface, when 'tis, I doubt not, suf- "ficiently soured already by a tedious play." The Court was the centre of "the town," and especially of "the town" as representing a miniature world of fashion, letters, and taste. In the galleries of the Palace those hasty judgments were pronounced, and those ready witticisms repeated, which formed the criticism of the age. "The favour," Dryden remarks, in one of his

argumentative prefaces, " which heroic plays have " lately found upon our theatres, has been wholly " derived from the countenance and approbation " they have received at Court." * To the town, therefore, and to the Court as controlling the taste and directing the judgment of the town, the current literature was exclusively addressed. There were exceptions, doubtless, — exceptions that strengthened the rule. The *Observator* of Lestrange, with its panegyrics upon the King, and its invectives against Whigs and Dutchmen, was the oracle of the country gentlemen, and had a considerable circulation in the provinces. A dozen copies of the new poem or pamphlet might also at the same time leave the city, and after a tedious journey reach the cathedral and university towns to which they were addressed. Some copies of Farquhar's most genial comedy, being dedicated to his good friends around the Wrekin, and representing " the smoke, noise, scandal, " affectation, and pretension " that became the mimic gaieties of Shrewsbury, might possibly find their way to the pleasant banks of the Dee and the Severn. Sir Thomas Browne, amid his quaint and fantastic surroundings at Norwich, was pretty sure to be favoured with an early issue of the

* Southey, with the habitual injustice of the Lakers to Dryden, characterises this plain statement of fact as a specimen of the poet's " vile adulation."

latest work on physics or demonology. The Court and the Parliament, moreover, occasionally quitted the metropolis. During the Great Plague, London was nearly deserted by the upper classes, who retired to their country seats, or fluttered round the retreating Court. Roger North gives in the *Examen* an amusing account of the changed appearance of Oxford, when Charles, to separate the turbulent leaders of the popular party from the democracy of the city, appointed the Parliament to meet there in the year 1681. All the wits, writers, and place-hunters, who cluster round the skirts of the political world, had sallied down in a body to the High Church University, and he discovered his lobby acquaintances discussing politics and cold punch amid its shady cloisters. Printers and publishers speedily established themselves, and a flood of caricatures and lampoons deluged the streets. In one window the Duke of York might be seen busily engaged in setting fire to the Thames; in another a host of the more noticeable Royalists were mounted upon the Church of England, and urging her with whip and spur in the direction of Rome. But, apart from occasional exceptions, the Capital was really the only place in the kingdom where literature could command a permanent audience, and the only tribunal to which it could appeal.

The Court of Charles II. was not one which any Englishman can now regard with favour. The Kingdom of the Saints had become the Kingdom of the Flesh, and seldom had the devil presented a more shameless or seductive front. These magnificent English nobles were heartless profligates and swindling blacklegs. Of all the voluptuous beauties and noble matrons whom the ornate but exquisite pencil of Lely has rescued from decay, and consigned to a doubtful immortality, not one would now be tolerated in decent society. Miss Jennings, the sister of the Duchess of Marlborough (she herself subsequently became Duchess of Tyrconnel), had once at least, in the guise of an orange-girl, visited the city theatre, and sold her wares to the courtiers in the lobby. Miss Wells, another of the maids of honour, had wittily, if not very delicately, declared that, as her father had been loyal to King Charles the sire, she was bound to be loyal to King Charles the son. The Countess of Shrewsbury was notorious for her scandalous amours. Dressed as a page, she had held Buckingham's horse in the Park, and had witnessed, without emotion, her husband fall by her lover's hand. One of the most amusing pages in Hamilton's *Memoirs* is occupied with the incidents of an intrigue between the Duke of York and Lady Chesterfield, to whom he remained constant, till

a lucky but not very seemly accident permanently attached him to Arabella Churchill. So conscious, indeed, was old Sir John Denham—the well-known Cavalier poet—of the dangerous influences to which virtue was exposed, that, according to the scandal of the time, he sent his young and pretty bride out of the world to preserve her from the evil that is in the world. The writers of that age wax eloquent upon the maidenly virtues and charms of Frances Stewart. "Mrs. "Stewart in this dresse," Pepys rapturously exclaims, "with her hat cocked and a red plume, "with her sweet eyes, little Roman nose, and "excellent taille, is now the greatest beauty I "ever saw, I think, in all my life: and if ever "woman can, do excell my Lady Castlemaine, at "least in this dress." But even this virtuous paragon undertook to prove to Charles and his charmed Court, by evidence of the most direct kind, that the knees and ankles of the Duchess of Cleveland were not trimmer than her own.

A lively annalist — Anthony Hamilton — has celebrated this shameless society. With implicit and religious deference he follows his magnificent Chevalier through his amorous adventures: with cool audacity, with amazing effrontery, he describes every conceivable variety of intrigue; with grave and business-like composure he discusses the most trivial details of courtly etiquette.

In the Court of the Most Christian Monarch, if we are to judge from this book, any sense of the relative value of things had been utterly lost. The small feet, the white bosoms, the languishing blue eyes, the not over-modest accomplishments, and the not over-scrupulous manners, of the saucy and pensive beauties of the royal circle, had become subjects of graver and more anxious concern to princes and statesmen and captains, than a war with Europe or a revolt in the capital. They had been bitterly tried, but they had found no wisdom in sorrow, and learned none of the lessons of adversity.

The vivacity of the *Memoirs of Count Grammont* is somewhat unwieldy, and its wit rather elaborate; and the conduct of the narrative is careless, confused, and inartistic. But no other work brings us so directly into the Court of Charles. It is no longer King Charles the Second of sacred memory who rules these realms, but a good-tempered and easy-natured sultan, troubled with an awfully turbulent and disorderly hareem. He feeds his foreign ducks in the pond, saunters about his ill-kept palace, and indolently chaffers with the prettiest of the maids of honour. Sometimes, however, his idle existence is disturbed. De Grammont has presented him with one of the new glass coaches just introduced from Paris, and each imperious

sultana is desirous to obtain the novel luxury. The titular Queen has unsuccessfully preferred her timid claim. The Lady Castlemaine, being then in that interesting condition in which ladies wish to be who love their lords, threatens to miscarry if her wishes are disregarded; but Frances Stewart, pettishly resolving never to be in that way at all, carries the point against her jealous rival,—who thenceforward, for many a day, with tears and menaces, and angry reproaches, vexes the soul of the Merry Monarch. The Duke of York continues to hunt and pray and intrigue, curiously uniting in his own person the debauchee and the devotee. The King believes, indeed, that this apparent anomaly can be explained,— his brother's mistresses, he says, being so hideously ugly, that they must have been prescribed him for his sins. Even the precise and formal Rupert (whom the younger gallants covertly ridicule as out of date) cannot escape the prevailing epidemic, and leaving chemistry and mezzotinto, he follows Mrs. Hughes to the green-room. De Grammont, not yet captivated by Elizabeth Hamilton, is successfully engaged in carrying on the war among the subordinate nymphs, aided, as we are told, by a weekly packet from the French capital, containing among other small wares (thus was the soft passion ministered to in the seventeenth cen-

tury) "perfumed gloves, pocket looking-glåsses, "rare essences, and apricot pastes." The pallid Saint Evremond lectures an idle pupil; while Buckingham, with earnest assiduity, builds card houses with Miss Stewart. Rochester, indeed, is absent from the Court,—having fallen into disgrace for the present, he has assumed an uncouth Teutonic title, and, with inimitable impudence, but to the great contentment of the fair lieges, has taken to practise physic in the city.

This was the public upon whose patronage wits, poets, and philosophers were dependent, and to whose passion and caprice they were required to minister. We need not wonder that some writers—and these the greatest—haughtily withdrew. Butler, in a stinging satire, denounced the fine gentlemen, who, reversing the practice of the Puritan, exhibited "a forced hypocrisy of "wickedness," and made haste "with all their ut-"most vigour to be damned." Sir Thomas Browne lived at Norwich, and was seldom visible in the capital. The piety and purity of Henry Vaughan, and the rustic freshness and simplicity of Izaak Walton, had no element in common with those witty and graceless idlers, those high-born and high-bred Bohemians. And one—greater still —who, through the darkness, had beheld the hosts of the Most High flashing across the battlements of heaven,—

> The helmèd cherubim
> And sworded seraphim,—

regarded with moody and angry bitterness the evil days and evil tongues on which he had fallen. But with these exceptions (and with the exception, also, of a school of eminent divines) the wit, the poetry, the philosophy of the age were enlisted by the Court. And the result was one which might have been foreseen. The literature became as ribald, as heartless, and as foul as the men to whom it was addressed. It was witty, indeed; but the wit was local and sectional—the raillery being intelligible to the initiated only, to the privileged caste who were able to interpret its covert and veiled allusions. Nor was it without brilliancy: but it was a fitful and feverish brilliancy,—the froth of that mental fermentation, which the concentration of the whole intellectual activity of the nation necessarily communicated to the life of the capital. The satirist of the drawing-room, and the wit of the boudoir, though seldom appearing in public, are not quite unknown figures in our society; but during the reign of Charles that class of writers exerted a prodigious influence upon the fastidious and effeminate civilization from which, mushroom-like, they sprang.

Milton withdrew, but a figure almost as noticeable condescended to join in the masquerade.

It is not necessary for my present purpose to do more than to indicate briefly and generally the more prominent incidents in John Dryden's life.

The Drydens, who originally came from Cumberland, settled latterly at Canon Ashby in Northamptonshire. John Dryden's great-grandfather, by his last will and testament, solemnly bequeathed his soul to his Creator, "the Holy "Ghost assuring my spirit that I am the elect of "God." The poet—who thus came of a Calvinistic house—was born on the 6th of August, 1631. He was educated at Westminster under Dr. Busby, and at Trinity College, Cambridge. From the University he went to town; and, as the only way by which a living could be earned by literature in those days, began to write for the stage. He continued to do so, more or less industriously, all his life. In 1668 he succeeded Sir William Davenant as poet-laureate. It was not, however, until the fierce contest on the Exclusion Bill had broken out that Dryden's magnificent faculty as a satirist was manifested. *Absalom and Achitophel* was published in 1681. It was eagerly welcomed, and became at once amazingly popular. Dr. Johnson's father, an old bookseller, told his son that the sale had never been equalled in his time, except by *Sacheverell's Trial*. *Absalom and Achitophel* was followed by *The Medal*, in which the writer

ridiculed Shaftesbury; and by *Mac Flecknoe*, in which he ridiculed Shadwell. In 1686 he became a convert to Roman Catholicism; and, at the desire of James, wrote *The Hind and Panther*, to explain and vindicate the arbitrary ecclesiastical measures which the King had been induced to adopt. After the Revolution he ceased to be laureate, and returned to his old trade of playwright. The writing of plays, of prologues, and of translations, occupied the remainder of his life. To the last he retained his vigour. The celebrated *Ode to St. Cecilia* was composed at "a heat" shortly before his death. He died on the 1st of May, 1700, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Dryden was a man of an easy, indolent, and careless temper. None of his principles were deeply rooted. He never found leisure to mature his convictions. He had been a busy man from his youth upwards; he had been forced to work hard and incessantly for daily bread; and among the eager crowd of courtiers, and playwrights, and poets, he had found it difficult to keep his footing. A high sense of duty was not to be expected from a man trained in such a school. And duty, in its highest acceptation, was a word unknown in Dryden's vocabulary. He was unfitted by nature to play the part of a martyr. He had scarcely an opinion, in his

earlier years at least, for which he would have gone to the stake or the pillory.

There is considerable resemblance between the character of Dryden, in this respect, and the character which the popular voice assigns to *The Times* newspaper. Like *The Times*, he did not desire to form the opinion or to mould the policy of his contemporaries. He was content to reflect the age as in a mirror. His vigorous logic was ever eager to vindicate the fashion of the hour. His prefaces show an admirable critical sagacity; but they are often sophistical. For his plays, reflecting the popular taste, are whimsical and grotesque; and when a critic is ready to vindicate the whimsical and grotesque, he must borrow the weapons of the sophist. He liked to float with the stream: it seemed to him neither wise nor safe to swim against the tide. Thus he was often inconsistent: his opinions were constantly changing. He welcomed Cromwell: he welcomed the Restoration. He was a Puritan in his youth: a Prelatist in his manhood: a Papist in his old age.

But it is unfair to assume that meanness or baseness lay at the root of Dryden's pliability. His genius was masculine, but his moral nature was dependent. He had a sovereign intellect, but a subject will. He needed sympathy. He liked to be liked. He leant upon others. His

quick, active, generous sympathies eagerly sought for a return. He could not suffer in silence,—estranged from those who had charmed his imagination, or captivated his affections. Discord hurt and worried him: isolation was to him the keenest misery. Nor was this the worst: opposition chilled his imagination as well as his heart. Ere he could bring his faculties into highest working order, he required to be caught up, and hurried along, by the passion of the moment. To the *arbitrium popularis auræ* he was acutely sensitive. Milton's soul was like a star, and dwelt apart; but Dryden could not work in solitude. He was in his element in the city, in the coffee-house, at court, in the theatre. It has been said that necessity forced the poet to prostitute to low present uses a sublime and noble genius. But it may be doubted whether in happier circumstances he would have done so much, or so well, as he did. His faculties were naturally sluggish, and required to be spurred into activity. His temperament, moreover, was the temperament of the orator rather than of the poet. When at his best, it is easy to see that he is *en rapport* with an imaginary audience. In the heat of an excited imagination, he addresses a listening assembly. All his greatest works—his *Absalom and Achitophel*, his *Medal*, his *Hind and Panther*—were produced, in the

hurry of battle, to serve a temporary end. Had he lived in the country, and farmed his father's acres, it is more than probable that his poetry would never have risen above mediocrity—would have wanted the electric spark which is struck out when the imaginative reasoner is brought into instant contact with those whom he desires to persuade.

Dryden was thus all his life an inconsistent man. Acutely sensitive to the changes of the seasons, he lived in an age of sudden, severe, and violent change. It was difficult in that age for the steadiest man to maintain his constancy, and Dryden scarcely made the effort. But, "if he "changed" (as Dr. Johnson loftily observed), "he changed with the nation." You may go round with the globe—innocently enough: and inconsistency is often only another name for the i evitable progress of opinion. An obstinate man shuts his eyes and closes his ears : but Dryden, as we have seen, was easily accessible to direct and popular impressions. He sometimes went wrong; but, generally speaking, his inconsistencies will be found to represent the stages of an intellectual growth. Dryden's was essentially a teachable nature. He was never insolently bigoted. When experience had opened his eyes, he was able to lay aside pleasant vices, to renounce favourite errors, to acknowledge

freely and frankly that he had been wrong. The very impressibility of his character was a point in his favour. His grasp of principle was not tenacious: but he could the more easily fling prejudices away. His taste, which had been vitiated by evil example, improved as he grew old. His enemies might tell him, indeed, that he who had once been the most vehement advocate of rhyme—"my long-loved mistress"—had become its most vehement assailant. But the reproach was in truth a compliment; for it showed that he could learn and unlearn, and that, though frequently led astray, the purity of his taste and his natural sagacity ultimately asserted their superiority.

Dryden's conversion to the Church of Rome has been, indeed, eagerly seized upon by those who dislike his political persuasion. Lord Macaulay, echoing the language of many of his contemporaries, designated him "an illustrious "renegade," and attributed his change of faith to the meanest and most despicable motives. "Dryden," he says, "was poor, and impatient of "poverty. He knew little, and cared little about "religion. If any sentiment was deeply fixed in "him, that sentiment was an aversion to priests of "all persuasions, Levites, Augurs, Muftis, Roman "Catholic divines, Presbyterian divines, divines "of the Church of England. . . Finding that if he

" continued to call himself a Protestant, his ser-
" vices would be overlooked, he declared himself a
" Papist. The King's parsimony instantly relaxed.
" Dryden was gratified with a pension of a hun-
" dred pounds a year, and was employed to defend
" his new religion both in prose and verse." *

It will be observed that Lord Macaulay's indictment assumes that James refused to do anything for the laureate until he had changed his faith, but that, whenever the change was declared, the King's parsimony relaxed, and Dryden received a pension of a hundred pounds a year. The fact is, however, that Dryden received his pension *before* his conversion, and under circumstances which make it extremely difficult to connect it with an anticipated change of faith. The pension was originally granted by Charles; lapsing on Charles's death, it was renewed by James; the letters patent are dated March 4, 1685, about a year after Charles's death, but they set forth that the annuity was to run from March 25 preceding,—that is, from the date when the annuity granted by Charles ceased; Dryden's conversion, so far as is known, did not take place, or at least was not "declared," till late in the year 1686.†

* *History of England*, ii. 196.

† I am indebted to Mr. Robert Bell's investigations for the facts mentioned in the text. In the preface to his edition of Dryden's poems, he quotes at length the documents referred to.—*Dryden's Poetical Works*, edited by Robert Bell (1854), i. 55.

There are no grounds, therefore, for holding that Dryden received a pension *in consequence* of his conversion; on the contrary, it is abundantly clear that at the time when he received the pension from Charles, and at the time when it was renewed by James, there was no reason to doubt that he was a Protestant.

The sordid motives assigned by Lord Macaulay are inconsistent, therefore, with the visible circumstances of the case, nor is it difficult—if we consider attentively the character of the man, and of the position in which he was placed—to arrive at the probable grounds of the poet's change of faith.

The Roman Catholic was the religion of the royal family,—of a family to whom Dryden was attached by feelings of strong personal regard. Charles, if the worst of kings, was yet the pleasantest of companions. Perfectly unaffected, and perfectly fearless, he did not hesitate to mix with his subjects in the most familiar manner. And he had a shrewd eye both for men and books. He had acquired his experience in a school, indeed, which had aged him before his time. He was an old man at the Restoration. "I never "till this day observed that the King was mighty "grey," Pepys says, about 1662. In his careless brilliancies (and many of them are really, and not royally, brilliant only) we see a mind

of great natural parts, that has been permitted to run to seed. Good-humoured, if somewhat cynical, toleration was his habitual mood. His courtiers might quiz him: he only laughed. When he heard of Rochester's well-known epigram, he observed: "Quite true: my sayings are "my own, but my doings are those of my min- "isters." Shaftesbury, with his usual felicity, said that under King Charles the unfortunate fell lightly; and, had Charles consulted his own inclinations, he would never have sent anything sharper than a jest or an epigram after his bitterest enemies. But though habits of indulgence had weakened the spring of his mind, it still retained a fine edge. His taste was good, and he liked good books. If it be true that the fine lines of Shirley,—

> The glories of our birth and state
> Are shadows, not substantial things;
> There is no armour against fate;
> Death lays his icy hands on kings.
> Sceptre and crown
> Must tumble down,
> And in the dust be equal made
> With the poor crookèd scythe and spade,—

were greatly admired by him, he must clearly have possessed a capacity for appreciating poetry of the highest class. Charles starved his poets; but, so long as they did not weary him with importunities, he was pleased to meet them, and to have them about him. He was frankly intimate

with Waller and Dryden. He told the former, it is said, that his ode on Cromwell was superior to that on himself. "Poets, sire," was the witty apology, "succeed better in fiction than in truth." Not unfrequently, of a morning, the King might be seen with Dryden in St. James's Park, conversing familiarly about the last rhyming play, or the new book of poems. Charles appears to have had a real regard for Dryden; he was always ready to defend him when assailed, telling those critics, for instance, who charged the laureate with theft, that he only wished they would steal him plays like Dryden's; and Dryden, on his side, who loved the great, was intoxicated by this flattering intimacy with royalty. While the King lived, his laureate was one of his staunchest friends; at his death, one of his truest mourners. The attachment which he had felt for Charles was, on Charles's death, naturally transferred to James; and not only was James a Catholic, but some of the poet's nearest connections—his wife and his eldest son, among others—were already members of that Church.

Such a relationship could not fail to exercise an important influence on the opinions of a man like Dryden. His temperament, as we have seen, unfitted him for opposition. He could not put out his leaves in the shade. He liked to bask in the sunshine, not merely because it was pleasant,

but because it was essential to the free and harmonious development of his poetical nature. Gracious, generous, tolerant, of a most loving and loveable disposition, he was yet entirely deficient in will. He could not separate himself from his friends; rather than do so, even when his better judgment was unconvinced, he was ready to bear them company. There is moral weakness, if not cowardice, here; the character is not severely masculine: still there is a vast difference between the man who changes his religion because he is a base and sordid adventurer, and the man who does so because he cannot bear to be divided from those to whom he is attached.

It must be remembered, also, that there was an ancient alliance between the High Tory party and Roman Catholicism. Both hated the Puritan,—the one because he had destroyed the monarchy, the other because he had carried his revolt against the Papacy to its logical conclusion,—which the Church of England had wisely refused to do. The courtly gallants of that age oscillated between infidelity and Popery,—between the Papal nuncio and Hobbes, to whom, as Clarendon says, the doors of Whitehall were open.* Dryden

* "After the king's return he "came frequently to court, where "he had too many disciples, and "once visited me,"—who do not by any means approve of his political doctrines.—*A brief View and Survey of the dangerous and pernicious Errors to Church and State in Mr. Hobbes' book entitled "Leviathan."*

did not love the priesthood of any church, but it is probable that he regarded the Puritan pastors, under whom he had suffered in his youth, with peculiar dislike. For years he had been inclined to doubt; but doubt was not the mood natural to his dependent temper. When, in later life, he began to experience the need of religion, the inducements which Romanism holds out were those which appealed most directly to his mind. In the *Religio Laici*, his first serious poem, he ostensibly attacked the Papacy. But, even in this work, he showed that he was not insensible to the strength of the authority which it claimed. Such an omniscient infallible Church, he says in effect, were worth the whole canon of Scripture "cast in the Creed;" and—he continues—one cannot help wishing for such a guide, were it only possible to find him. In the interval between the publication of the *Religio Laici* and of *The Hind and Panther*, he persuaded himself that he had found what he had so earnestly desired to find,—some cheap and secure spiritual footing:—

What weight of ancient witness can prevail,
If private reason hold the public scale?
But, gracious God, how well dost thou provide
For erring judgments an unerring guide!
Thy throne is darkness in the abyss of light,
A blaze of glory that forbids the sight.
O teach me to believe Thee thus conceal'd,
And search no farther than thyself reveal'd!
But her alone for my director take,
Whom thou hast promised never to forsake.

To Dryden's understanding the one position was the logical development of the other. It cannot be reasonably doubted that the writer of the *Religio Laici* was on the high road to Catholicism; especially when we know that, in his case, the intellectual craving was urged on and reinforced by the affections.

This, then, as it appears to me, was Dryden's real position: let us examine Lord Macaulay's argument by the light we have now obtained.

"There will always be a strong presumption "against the sincerity of a conversion by which "the convert is directly a gainer. In the case "of Dryden there is nothing to countervail the "presumption. His theological writings abun-"dantly prove that he had never sought with "diligence and anxiety to learn the truth, and "that his knowledge both of the Church which "he quitted and of the Church which he entered "was of the most superficial kind. Nor was his "subsequent conduct that of a man whom a "strong sense of duty had constrained to take a "step of awful importance. Had he been such "a man, the same conviction which led him to "enter the Church of Rome would surely have "prevented him from violating, grossly and "habitually, rules which this Church, in com-"mon with every other Christian society, recog-"nizes as binding. There would have been a

"marked distinction between his earlier and his "later compositions. He would have looked "back with remorse on a literary life of near "thirty years, during which his rare powers of "diction and versification had been systematic-"ally employed in spreading moral corruption. "Not a line tending to make virtue contemptible, "or to inflame licentious desire, would thence-"forward have proceeded from his pen. The "truth unhappily is, that the dramas which he "wrote after his pretended conversion are in no "respect less impure or profane than those of his "youth. Even when he professed to translate "he constantly wandered from his originals in "search of images which, if he had found them "in his originals, he ought to have shunned. "What was bad became worse in his versions. "What was innocent contracted a taint from "passing through his mind. He made the "grossest satires of Juvenal more gross, interpo-"lated loose descriptions in the tales of Boccaccio, "and polluted the sweet and limpid poetry of "the Georgics with filth which would have "moved the loathing of Virgil." *

Three sets of arguments are very skilfully combined in this passage. We are told that Dryden's conversion was not sincere—(1) be-

* *History of England,* vol. ii. p. 197.

cause by it he was directly a gainer: (2) because he had no anxiety to learn the truth, and was a superficial theologian: (3) because the tone of his writings did not improve after his conversion.

1. Dryden, as we have seen, was not a gainer in the sense in which Lord Macaulay used the word. He was not paid by a pension for his conversion. On the contrary, the pension was granted long before his conversion, and there is no evidence that he subsequently received any pecuniary mark of the royal favour.

2. That Dryden showed no desire or anxiety to learn the truth is, I think, contradicted by the fact that he wrote the *Religio Laici.* The *Religio Laici* is the work of a man from whom the enigmas of life demand an answer, who has applied his mind to their solution, who acknowledges their difficulty and their fascination. That he was a superficial theologian only makes it more probable that he would be easily misled. An ingenious plausibility, which the learning and disciplined intellect of an accomplished controversialist like Stillingfleet would have dispersed as the sun disperses the mist, might perplex and deceive a theological neophyte. Dr. Johnson, in fact, had perceived, with his usual sagacity, that this was a strong point in favour of Dryden's sincerity. "If men of argument and study can

"find such difficulties, or such motives, as may
"either unite them to the Church of Rome, or
"detain them in uncertainty, there can be no
"wonder that a man who perhaps never inquired
"why he was a Protestant, should by an artful
"and experienced disputant be made a Papist,
"overborne by the sudden violence of new and
"unexpected arguments, or deceived by a repre-
"sentation which shows only the doubts on one
"part, and only the evidence on the other."

3. Dryden was not an immoral man. In his youth he had been a favourite with women: "for thy dear sake the blushing virgins died;" but, except his early intrigue with Mrs. Reeves the actress, the malignant industry of enemies found little in his conduct on which they could lay hold, and his friends eagerly asserted that his life was pure, and free from dissipation of any kind. There can be little doubt that, for the age, Dryden was singularly moral; and if his writings were immoral, so, it must be answered, were the contemporary manners and the contemporary literature. Assuming, however, that his writings were exceptionally immoral, and that their tone did not improve after his conversion, I am disposed to question the relevancy of the argument on which Lord Macaulay insists. I cannot admit that a sincere change of creed (seeing that a change of creed

may be an intellectual process only,—not implying any moral metamorphosis) is necessarily accompanied by a change of life. And, in truth, Lord Macaulay, in other passages of his history, shortly and summarily disposes of the argument which he had pressed against Dryden. The country gentlemen, he says, were warmly attached to the Church of England; but, as a class, they were bad livers. "Few among them "could give any reason drawn from Scripture or "ecclesiastical history for adhering to her doc"trines, her ritual, and her polity: nor were "they, as a class, by any means strict observers "of that code of morality which is common to "all Christians. But the experience of many "ages proves that men may be ready to fight to "the death, and to persecute without pity, for "a religion whose creed they do not understand, "and whose precepts they habitually disobey." * We have seen how Lord Macaulay speaks of Dryden's conversion to Catholicism: it is instructive to notice how his tone changes when he describes Lord Shrewsbury's conversion to the Church of England. "He studied the disputed points 'closely, submitted his doubts to priests of his "own faith, laid their answers before Tillotson, "weighed the arguments on both sides long and

* *History of England*, vol. i. p. 323.

"attentively, and, after an investigation which "occupied two years, declared himself a Protes- "tant. The Church of England welcomed the "illustrious convert with delight." The Earl's conversion being the effect of an honest and intelligent change of conviction, was followed, it is to be presumed, by the fruits of good living. This, unhappily, was not the case. "The cha- "racter of the young Earl did not, however, deve- "lope itself in a manner quite satisfactory to those "who had borne the chief part in his conversion. "His morals by no means escaped the contagion "of fashionable libertinism. In truth, the shock "which had overturned his early prejudices "had at the same time unfixed all his opinions "and left him to the unchecked guidance of his "feelings."* Had Lord Macaulay carried out his argument without respect of persons, ought not his conclusion from these facts to have been that Shrewsbury, like Dryden, was "an illustrious "renegade?"

Criticism of this kind, involving, as it does, inquiry into the heart and the conscience, is always attended with a measure of uncertainty. But it appears to me that Dryden's subsequent career witnesses to the sincerity of his change of faith. The internal evidence of *The Hind and*

* *History of England,* vol. ii. pp. 318–19.

Panther cannot be disregarded. *The Hind and Panther is the work of an honest Roman Catholic.* Whatever might have been the original and exciting cause of the change, there can be no doubt that, while engaged in the composition of that remarkable poem, the writer earnestly believed that he had done his duty.

> If joys hereafter must be purchased here
> With loss of all that mortals hold most dear,
> Then welcome infamy and public shame,
> And last, a long farewell to worldly fame!
> 'Tis said with ease: but, oh! how hardly tried
> By haughty souls to human honour tied.
> O sharp convulsive pangs of agonizing pride!
> Down then, thou rebel, never more to rise!
> And what thou didst, and dost, so dearly prize,
> That fame, that darling fame, make that thy sacrifice.
> 'Tis nothing thou hast given: then add thy tears
> For a long race of unrepenting years;
> 'Tis nothing yet, yet all thou hast to give:
> Then add those may-be years thou hast to live:
> Yet nothing still: then poor and naked come,
> Thy father will receive his unthrift home,
> And thy blest Saviour's blood discharge the mighty sum.

He educated his younger sons in the Catholic faith: spite of solicitation, spite of menace, he never wavered in his allegiance. He had made his choice, and he did not flinch. He was true to his religion and to his king. He declined to dedicate his Virgil to William (though Tonson partly succeeded in giving the Liberator's hooked nose to the Trojan hero), and he declined to tamper with his conscience, or to conceal his religious

convictions. "I must follow the dictates of my "reason and of my conscience,—do my duty and "suffer for God's sake. I can never repent of "my constancy, since I am thoroughly persuaded "of the justice of the cause for which I suffer." These expressions are taken from a letter written shortly before his death, and he died in the communion of the Church which he had adopted. He had found the rest which he coveted, and he did not care again to tempt the waves on which he had been storm-tossed.

Lord Macaulay says that Dryden had during many years earned his bread by grossly flattering rich and noble patrons; and that self-respect and a fine sense of the becoming were not to be expected from one who had led a life of mendicancy and adulation.* The florid dedications of that age are apt to startle a reader used to the simplicity and reserve of our own; but we should arrive at a most erroneous conclusion if we inferred that an amount of adulation which would indicate at the present time a truly despicable spirit indicated meanness and servility in the reign of Charles II. These florid dedications were the fashion of the day. They were one of the recognised forms of literary work, and were paid for

* *History of England,* vol. ii. p. 196.

accordingly. For more than a century scarcely a single work had been published by any author of note which did not carry on its title-page the name of some patron—more or less illustrious. Even Spenser condescended to pay the current tribute to Cæsar. To his fine and mystical poem fifteen of these adulatory pieces are prefixed. Some writers, no doubt, carried the practice to an extravagant and ludicrous excess. One author dedicated each book of his translation of Hippocrates' *Aphorisms* to one of his friends, and the index to another. Dryden, in like manner, inscribed the different books of his translation of Virgil to various individuals,—"an economy of "flattery," in the words of Dr. Johnson, "at "once lavish and discreet, which did not pass "without observation." But, apart from occasional excess, the custom was one to which men of high spirit and undoubted courage did not hesitate to conform. It became a contest of wit, an intellectual piece of gymnastics,—sanctioned by taste and present custom and ancient repute. Who can represent my lady's virtue and charity, or my lord's eloquence and learning, in the richest, most splendid, and most graceful colours? *That* is what is to be done,—who among you can do it most effectively? To stand on your head, or to wear an outrageously-coloured hat, may be very ridiculous and unbecoming; but the man who

does so, in common with the rest of the world, cannot justly be charged with baseness. This curious and whimsical art formed in one sense the portrait-painting of the time. The artist did not essay, indeed, to represent his sitter to the life. He did not care to copy too closely the features of his patrons. They became, under his skilful manipulation, the Seasons, the Hours, the Graces. It was necessary, of course, to preserve a certain consistency; but when the naked figure had once been lightly indicated, the artist might add at will the choicest flowers of speech, and the finest bloom of fancy. This was what Dryden did,—more skilfully, more lavishly, more superbly, than any of his rivals. Pope is a noble flatterer, but after an entirely different fashion. How quietly does he render his homage—with what a delicate hand, with what refinement of tact, with what point and appositeness! His flattery is never overdone; he preserves a monumental conciseness, a terse Horatian simplicity; he is occupied upon something quite apart, and merely makes his friends a courtly bow by the way as he passes. Pope's homage is the involuntary admiration of an equal; Dryden's is the prostration of a worshipper, the ardour of a devotee. Dryden had an admirable insight into character, as his sketches of Burnet and Shaftesbury and Buckingham show; but in these triumphal processions and Olympian

banquets we are not to look for nice discrimination. Lord Treasurer Clifford is a better Mæcenas, Sir Charles Sedley a more elegant Tibullus. The nobleman who brought the poet to Whitehall is that Pollio or that Varus "who introduced me "to Augustus." "The Queen of Beauty and the "Court of Love" are represented by the Duchess of York and her handmaids. This splendid homage, coming, *purpureo ore*, from the master of English song, dignifies adulation. It is the flattery of a Raleigh,—he kneels and casts his cloak before the queen.

> When factious rage to cruel exile drove
> The Queen of Beauty and the Court of Love,
> The Muses drooped with their forsaken arts,
> And the sad Cupids broke their useless darts:
> Our fruitful plains to wilds and deserts turned,
> Like Eden's face, when banished man it mourned.
> Love was no more, when loyalty was gone,
> The great supporter of his awful throne.
> Love could no longer after Beauty stay,
> But wandered northward to the verge of day,
> As if the sun and he had lost their way.
> But now the illustrious nymph, returned again,
> Brings every grace triumphant in her train.

A dedication by Dryden, therefore, is to be regarded solely as an intellectual *tour de force*, not necessarily involving servility of feeling or lack of self-respect; and it is in this light, I have no hesitation in saying, that whatever I otherwise know of the facts induces me to regard it.

The spirit of the literary and political controversy of that age was savagely intemperate; but it is eminently unfair to single out Dryden, as Lord Macaulay has done, to point the moral of his censure. "The spirit by which Dryden "and several of his compeers were at this time "animated against the Whigs, deserves to be "called fiendish." * The converse of the proposition — so far at least as Dryden was concerned—would more nearly have represented the truth. Dryden was not a vindictive man. His robust and generous nature could not harbour petty malice. Congreve says that he was humane, compassionate, moderate in conversation, gentle in correction, ready to forgive. And probably no public man of that day had more to forgive, had been so coarsely and bitterly assailed. He had not only been ridiculed and caricatured; he had been beaten by Rochester's hired ruffians, he had been accused of gross and infamous crimes, his peculiarities of face and manner had been publicly exhibited on the stage. He was not the man to allow such assaults to pass with impunity. He felt them keenly, and at the moment (though his resentments were not long-lived) he resented them bitterly. We may believe that he partly knew and understood how immensely superior he

* *History of England,* vol. i. p. 403.

was to the rivals who were pitted against him; yet his tone of arrogant confidence and ostentatious superiority was clearly to some extent assumed. Thackeray justly lauded this "noble "old English lion;" and we see in his character something of the lion's generosity, and of the lion's violence. With an air of intense disdain and contempt for the insects who buzz about his ears, he unites swift indignation and almost breathless anger. The kingly beast is persuaded that they are vermin; yet—for the reptiles hurt him—he roars and winces and lashes his tail fiercely. And he could not afford to be serene. His position was a false one: he had quitted the cool poetic woodside, and descended into the heated and dusty arena; for bare life he had been forced to undertake work for which he was unfitted, and to follow an ignoble calling; to bring his magnificent powers of invective and persuasion to uphold a rotten dynasty of kings and poets. Dryden was thus always most violent when clearly and obviously in the wrong. Yet his anger did not last long: he quickly repented. He could not hate in cold blood. And though he was not fastidious about the weapons which he used (generally seizing that which lay nearest at the moment), it cannot be said that his writings were disgraced by the brutal ferocity which disgraced his adversaries. "As for knave,"

he says, "and sycophant, and rascal, and impu-
"dent, and devil, and old serpent, and a thousand
"such good-morrows, I take them to be only
"names of parties; and could return murderer,
"and cheat, and Whig-trapper, and Sodomite; and,
"in short, the goodly number of the seven deadly
"sins, with all their kindred and relations;" but
he would not stoop to such revenge. His per-
sonalities were boisterous but good-humoured.
He pursued Shadwell pertinaciously; but there
was no rancour in his laughter. "Og," he
remarked in the last passage which he directed
against his corpulent antagonist, "Og may write
"against the King if he pleases, so long as he
"drinks for him, and his writings will never do
"the government so much harm as his drinking
"does it good; for true subjects will not be much
"perverted by his libels; but the wine duties
"rise considerably by his claret. He has often
"called me an atheist in print; I would believe
"more charitably of him, and that he only goes
"the broad way because the other is too narrow
"for him. I have hitherto contented myself with
"the ridiculous part of him, which is enough,
"in all conscience, to employ one man: even with-
"out the story of his late fall at the Old Devil,
"where he broke no ribs, because the hardness
"of the stairs could reach no bones; and for my
"part I do not wonder how he came to fall, for I

" have always known him heavy; the miracle is, " how he got up again." Nor was Dryden's poetical satire the satire of a " fiend"; he was our greatest satirist, and he felt no doubt the enjoyment which the true artist feels in his work; but *The Medal*, and *MacFlecknoe*, and *Absalom and Achitophel* show none of the mercilessness of Swift. Swift's sustained power of ironical reasoning, inferring as it did for its exercise a mind of savage sagacity and little sensibility, was a power which Dryden did not exercise, and could not have exercised. However mean the character, however detestable the argument, the Dean adopted the one, and developed the other, with cruel logic. A weak or generous nature would have dropped the mask at times; the consistency would have been impaired, but our sense of justice would have been gratified by occasional denunciations of the folly and villany and stupidity which were being depicted; but Swift never winces, never blushes, is never pained, but goes straight on, without fear or love, to complete his gloomy fresco. Dryden, on the contrary, is apt to relent. He knows that even Shaftesbury has good points; and he feels uneasy until he has pointed them out. Butler, who did not love Dryden, ridiculed the heroic play in a brilliant and unsparing satire. The high-flown and metaphysical amours of Almanzor and Almahide

are grotesquely reflected in the repartees of Cat and Puss at a caterwauling.

Cat. Forbear, foul ravisher, this rude address;
Canst thou at once both injure and caress?
Puss. Thou hast bewitch'd me with thy powerful charms,
And I, by drawing blood, would cure my harms.
Cat. He that does love would set his heart a tilt,
Ere one drop of his lady's should be spilt!
Puss. Your wounds are but without, and mine within;
You wound my heart, and I but prick your skin;
And while your eyes pierce deeper than my claws,
You blame the effect of which you are the cause.

Yet Dryden, who willingly acknowledged the terse, if moody, power of Butler's muse, replied only by a compliment. "'Tis enough for one "age to have neglected Mr. Cowley and starved "Mr. Butler." He admired generously; for his taste was catholic and unfastidious. He loved Shakspeare; he defended Milton; he extolled Donne and Cowley; he greeted younger writers —Congreve and Addison—with an eager welcome. There was no place in any niche of his soul for paltry jealousy or base dislike.

Lord Macaulay is particularly severe upon what he is pleased to call the "whinings" of Dryden after the Revolution.* Swift, whose animosity to Dryden has often been noticed,† and who ridiculed his translations from Virgil in *The*

* *History of England*, vol. iii. p. 24, and Index.

† To the well-known "Cousin Swift will never be a poet," this animosity has been attributed.

Battle of the Books, has skilfully caricatured this failing of his declining years in the Introduction to *A Tale of a Tub.* "These notices may serve "to give the learned reader an idea, as well as a "taste, of what the whole book is likely to pro-"duce: wherein I have now altogether circum-"scribed my thoughts and my studies; and if I "can bring it to a perfection before I die, shall "reckon I have well employed the poor remains "of an unfortunate life. This, indeed, is more "than I can justly expect from a quill worn to "the pith in the service of the State, in pros "and cons upon Popish plots, and meal-tubs, and "exclusion bills, and passive obedience, and ad-"dresses of lives and fortunes; and prerogative, "and property, and liberty of conscience, and "letters to a friend; from an understanding and "a conscience threadbare and ragged with per-"petual turning; from a head broken in a hun-"dred places by the malignants of the opposite "factions; and from a body ill-cured by trusting "to surgeons who, as it afterwards appeared, "were professed enemies to me and the govern-"ment, and revenged their party's quarrel upon "my nose and shins. Fourscore and eleven "pamphlets have I written under three reigns, "and for the service of six and thirty factions. "But, finding the State has no farther occasion

" for me and my ink, I retire willingly to draw
" it out into speculations more becoming a phi-
" losopher; having, to my unspeakable comfort,
" passed a long life with a conscience void of
" offence." This is admirable satire, and reflects with consummate fidelity the tone of many of Dryden's apologies and vindications. There can be no doubt that his complaints were sometimes undignified. But he did not particularly study dignity; and, as we have seen, he was not a martyr who could bear pain in silence. His amiable, impulsive nature, when chilled by neglect or unkindness, became querulous; and he would have been an entirely different man from what I conceive him to have been, had he displayed his weaknesses with a less engaging frankness.

It must be admitted, moreover, that Dryden manifested no very lofty conception of his literary vocation. The drama was his meat and drink—nothing more. He was indolent about fame, and the opinion of posterity did not inspire him with any awe. But he wished to stand well with his contemporaries; their good-will was pleasant to him; and for immediate popularity he was ready to sacrifice his higher instincts and his better judgment. Sir Walter Scott has finely lamented the cost at which this popularity was purchased.

> Dryden, in immortal strain,
> Had raised the Table Round again,
> But that a ribald king and court
> Bade him toil on to make them sport:
> Demanded for their niggard pay,
> Fit for their souls, a looser lay,
> Licentious satire, song, and play:
> The world defrauded of the high design,
> Profaned the God-given strength, and marr'd the lofty line.

But the sacrifice did not pain him; his indolent nature was easily contented; he did not struggle, and he did not aspire. He never pursued a coy and unapproachable ideal,—his buxom mistress dispensed her favours freely. Had he attempted a higher style of poetical composition, he would probably have failed. His imagination, though fertile, was neither subtle nor pathetic; his ear wanted tune and fineness of melody; and he was often, in consequence, outrageously absurd. He saw immediately around him, indeed, with remarkable clearness; but he was not far-sighted. He might be pardoned for believing that the ashes of Cromwell would be permitted to rest in a "peaceful urn;" but his *Ode on the Birth of the Prince of Wales* shows, as has been said, "a pro-"found insensibility of the precipice on which "the King was standing." When sophistry could be dispensed with, when he was not consciously unconscientious, he exercised, without doubt, a great and admirable common sense. His taste in the main was sound,—just, if not severe. In

spite of sophistry, in spite of slovenliness, he was the first great English critic.

And among English poets he must ever hold a foremost place. His superiority to the poets of his own and of the immediately preceding age, consisted in his *directness.* The plague, accident, violent death, had, ere the execution of Charles I., sadly thinned the ranks of the great old school of English poets. Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Carew, Herbert, Suckling, had died, either before Dryden was born, or during his boyhood. Apart from Shakspeare (who belongs to no school in particular), Ben Jonson was the greatest of the goodly company who met at the Apollo and the Mermaid, when those "wit-combats," celebrated by Fuller, had been held, and may be taken as the representative of the other. Jonson united an exquisite simplicity, an unpremeditated sweetness, with a laborious but intense and powerful understanding. Snatches of delicious music alternate in his plays with the most compact, robust, and nervous work. In the pungency of that grave and somewhat ascetic moralist there was no levity nor flippancy. He hewed and chiseled the characters of his drama in the spirit and after the fashion in which Buonarotti worked. His choice of subject, indeed, is often open to exception. It is characteristic, perhaps, but unfelicitous. He expended wit and imagination and copious learning upon the vilest and most

repulsive shapes. The wretched figure of a blear-eyed miser, or of a cunning knave, is cast in pure gold, is dwelt upon with a devotion of hatred, with a passion of untiring and consuming scorn. Even among the smallest of these early lyrists, we are delighted by a charming delicacy and sweetness of melody and archness of expression, —the first fine careless rapture of the children of song. But when Dryden began to write, the echoes of the old school were growing faint. Evil tendencies, which, though in the bud, could be discerned even in the greatest of the Elizabethan dramatists, had expanded and developed. The euphuistic poets played upon words, the metaphysical upon ideas. Truth and melody were sacrificed—the one to mental, the other to verbal dexterity. The tone of this school was comparatively pure; but the courtier poets of the Restoration, who brought French manners as well as French idioms across the Channel, added a *soupçon* of false and heartless wit. The verse of Dorset,—

> Love is a calmer, gentler joy,
> Smooth are his locks, and soft his pace;
> *Her* Cupid is a blackguard boy,
> That runs his link full in your face,—

might be used to indicate the difference between the older and the later poets of the Stuarts. Herrick, indeed, still lived, and Herrick, who had talked with the old masters, had caught their

glow,—some of their light had fallen upon him.* Except Herrick, there was not a man living in England in 1660 who could have written *The Sweet Neglect*,† or the *Odes to Celia*. In *The Hesperides*, with a vast mass of indecent rubbish, we find poems that breathe a true simplicity, others that preserve a tender solemnity, like that of the failing light or of the autumn leaves :

> Fair daffodils, we weep to see
> You haste away so soon;
> As yet the early rising sun
> Has not attain'd his noon.
> Stay, stay,
> Until the hast'ning day
> Has run
> But to the even-song;
> And having prayed together, we
> Will go with you along!

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* Herrick, in one of his poems, recalls how he and Ben Jonson had sat together at "lyric feasts:"—

> Ah, Ben!
> Say how or when
> Shall we, thy guests,
> Meet at those lyric feasts
> Made at the Sun,
> The Dog, the Triple Tun,
> Where we such clusters had
> As made us nobly wild, not mad?
> And yet each verse of thine
> Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine.

† Give me a look, give me a face,
That makes simplicity a grace:
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:
Such sweet neglect more taketh me
Than all the adulteries of art;
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.
BEN JONSON'S *Silent Woman*.

But Herrick stood almost alone, and it was to the poetical society I have described that Dryden was introduced. Here he at once became a power, and his weapons were simplicity and directness. There was little resemblance, indeed, between the moral and somewhat sullen intensity of Jonson, and Dryden's keen and trenchant faculty. Nor did he escape unharmed from the taint of the prevailing poetical taste. Passages of false magnificence and gaudy ornament abound in his plays; and his earlier poems are disfigured by the mental and verbal conceits which were then so popular. But the drama, for which he had really no vocation—"to the "stage," he confesses, "my genius never much "inclining me"—is to be regarded only as the workshop where he polished his arms; and his great natural sagacity always kept him more or less true to nature, and gave even to his most whimsical conceits the air of probability which a logical and powerful intellect stamps upon its creations. His contemporaries and immediate predecessors had lost directness as well as simplicity. They curvetted round their subject; they were allusive, illustrative, anecdotical, antithetical, but never straightforward. Dryden went straight to the mark. He hit hard. He was a sturdy thinker, an energetic controversialist. He reasoned closely,—vigorously at

least, if not always accurately. His wit was keen and incisive. His illustrations were compact,—splendid as the garb of a Cavalier, yet fitting with Puritanic precision. A man possessed of such a faculty could not fail, coming at the time he came, to work a revolution in our literature, and the change in modern poetical taste is largely due to the influence of Dryden.

To this vigorous directness were added wonderful fertility of conception, and extraordinary splendour of language. He contracted to supply the theatre with four plays a year,—in one year he produced no less than six. They may not intrinsically be worth much; but when we consider that they are ingenious and elaborate, that they abound in amusing incidents and striking situations, and that nearly all of them are written in rhyme, we obtain some idea of his copious resources and of his amazing inventiveness. Dryden's "mighty line" is a household word. It is needless to dwell upon that incomparable command of the stateliest music of our mother-tongue, to which the author of *Absalom and Achitophel* and of *The Hind and Panther* attained. Such lines as the lines that close his great satirical poem,—

> Henceforth a series of new time began,
> The mighty years in long procession ran;

> Once more the god-like David was restored,
> And willing nations knew their lawful lord,—

are full of life, and fire, and strength, and kingly dignity.

Though Dryden was unquestionably the most accomplished reasoner in verse that we have had in England—reasoning even more freely and accurately in verse than in prose,—a rare, if not admirable gift—yet it is as a satirist that his fame endures. The form of our humorous literature has undergone a great change since the Revolution. Charles II., with keen mother-wit, is reported to have said of certain cautious conspirators, that they committed treason by advice of counsel; and our humorists, in an age when, according to high authority, "truth is a "libel," virtually wrote after the same fashion. In this way all our popular irony is inferential, and, whether in the speeches of Mr. Disraeli, the romances of Mr. Thackeray, the criticisms of *Punch*, or the poems of Bon Gaultier, derives its force from the subtle reserve and sarcastic delicacy of a weapon that wounds with the stealthy stroke of the stiletto. But Dryden, in his satirical as in his other poems, is eminently direct and emphatic. He tells us what he thinks of his victim in a perfectly unmistakable manner. Thus, in an exhaustive couplet, he crucifies his unwieldy rival:—

> With all his bulk, there's nothing lost in Og,
> For every inch that is not fool is rogue.

But we will fail to do justice to Dryden unless we regard him as a truly *imaginative* satirist. We see little of the imagination in his other works; he does not deal effectively with the simple and elemental passions to which most great poets appeal; he is never pathetic, and seldom sublime. But in his satire he rises to a high imaginative altitude. The difference between the satire of Dryden and the satire of Pope is the difference between a rebuke by Ezekiel and the prettiness of an epigram. There is an artful suddenness in Pope's attack. He is a master of surprise. He seems to pause, and turn indifferently away, when in the very act of raising his hand to strike the meditated blow,—

> Yet then did Gildon draw his venal quill,—
> I wished the man a dinner, and sat still;
> Yet then did Dennis rave with furious fret,
> I never answered,—*I was not in debt.*

None of this artifice is observable in Dryden. He plays his hand boldly and openly,—he does not condescend to finesse. Yet there is an imaginative amplitude in his sarcasm to which Pope could not rise. Not sharp and stinging words only, but rich and vigorous intellectual conceptions, does he hurl at the heads of his adversaries. Let me, to make my meaning

perfectly plain, contrast the Shadwell of *Mac Flecknoe* with the Goddess of Night and Chaos in the *Dunciad*. This is Shadwell:—

> Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,
> Mature in dulness from his tender years;
> Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he
> Who stands confirm'd in full stupidity.
> The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
> But Shadwell never deviates into sense.
> Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
> Strike through and make a lucid interval;
> But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
> His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
> Besides his goodly fabric fills the eye,
> And seems design'd for thoughtless majesty.
> Thoughtless as monarch oaks that shade the plain,
> And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.

These are the closing lines of the *Dunciad*:—

> She comes! she comes! the sable throne behold,
> Of Night primeval, and of Chaos old!
> Before her, Fancy's gilded clouds decay,
> And all its varying rainbows die away.
> . . . . . .
> Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,
> Art after art goes out, and all is night.
> See skulking Truth to her old cavern fled,
> Mountains of casuistry heap'd o'er her head!
> Philosophy, that lean'd on heaven before,
> Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
> Physics of Metaphysics begs defence,
> And Metaphysics calls for aid on Sense!
> See Mystery to Mathematics fly!
> In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
> Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
> And, unawares, Morality expires.
> Nor public flame, nor private, dares to shine:
> Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine!
> Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos, is restored:
> Light dies before thy uncreating word:
> Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall,
> And universal darkness covers all.

The first of these passages reveals the energy, cohesion, organisation, and perfect unity of a high imaginative conception. The man who wrote it was for the time heated by the fire of the imagination as truly as Shakspeare was when he wrote *Macbeth*, as truly as Milton was when he raised Pandemonium out of Chaos. But the other, though immensely clever, ingenious, and pointed, does not present any one distinct conception. It is a series of epigrams, elaborately worked out, and nicely tied together, with the view of producing a striking effect, but from which any one could be removed without injury to the rest. Dryden's lines, on the contrary, have been fused in the crucible of the imagination, and we could neither add nor take away without doing violence to the whole. And how magnificent the satire is! "The rest to some "faint meaning make pretence, but—Shadwell "never *deviates* into sense." The others are not quite destitute of wit, the light sometimes breaks through the mist; but—Shadwell's fogs *prevail* upon the day. Taken as a whole, this is, perhaps, the greatest passage in Dryden's works, and in English satirical literature.

Dryden's satire, however, though eminently direct, is not wanting in discrimination. He had a fine eye for character, and, like a clever tactician, did ample justice to the good points of

his adversaries. The most admirable and elaborate portrait that he has left is probably that of Shaftesbury. The "formidable cripple" seems to have fascinated the poet's imagination—as indeed he might. For, beyond all controversy, Shaftesbury, after Cromwell, was the most remarkable man of his age. Buckingham, who occupies nearly as large a place in the history of the time, was little more than his henchman, impelled by the sinister influence of an intellect more adventurous, and not less excitable, than his own. Though Otway represented Shaftesbury as the lewd Antonio in *Venice Preserved*, he does not appear to have been dissolute; he was an incorruptible judge; his domestic affections were strong. His address was eminently winning; his features were fine; his brown hair soft and abundant: "Mine was then," he says, in his Diary, "a flaxen inclined to brown, soft, and "turning at the ends." He had been born a cripple; he could not move without his man and his crutch; he suffered from daily epileptic fits—"I was never," he remarks, "without a "dull aching pain of that side"—yet he was an animated companion, and a busy and restless politician.* He was the counsellor of Cromwell—

* He used to jest on his lameness,—"They must be convinced," he said, before his trial, "that I could not run

"a vermin wriggling in the usurper's ear"—and the chancellor of Charles. Cromwell, who at a time when it was unusual to have two Christian names, compared Anthony Ashley Cowper to Marcus Tullius Cicero, "the little man with "three names," is said by Burnet to have offered to make him king. Charles declared that his chancellor knew more law than all his judges, and more divinity than all his bishops. He was the keenest and sharpest wit in an age of wits. His jests were as good as the King's—which is

"away;"—and it figured prominently in the caricatures of the time. "With this he made a "great noise, and bustled about "as fast as his legs, man, and "stick could carry him." (*Examen*, 123.) His Diary, which is a curious and sometimes graphic piece of writing, has been published by Mr. Christie in *The Shaftesbury Papers*. It is a curious fact, that though there is an entry on January 30, 1649, no mention is made of the event which took place on that day—the execution of Charles I. His presumed pretensions to the crown of Poland were the theme of endless merriment. In a contemporary burlesque, an apparition appears to Shaftesbury. "In a hideous tone it "cried out, 'I am a *plot*. Woe "'to England! Farewell till '78,' "and vanished. No sooner was "it gone than a stupid amaze-"ment seized upon the Majesty "of Poland, and cast him into a "deep sleep, where he lay till "morning, when awakening, he "found himself stript of all the "high and aspiring thoughts "that before had filled his "mind; pity and compassion "towards his native land com-"pletely cooled his ambition, "and from that moment he laid "by all thoughts of converting "the Turk, and resolved to stay "at home for confounding the "Pope."—*A modest Vindication of the Earl of Shaftesbury, concerning his being elected King of Poland.* Dryden alludes to the report in *The Medal*:—

The word pronounced aloud by shrieval voice,
Lætamur, which, in Polish, is Rejoice.

high praise. "Shaftesbury," said Charles, "I "believe thou art the wickedest dog in my domi- "nions." "Of a *subject*, sire, I believe I am," was the answer. During his speech against the Test Bill, overhearing an indolent prelate say, "I "wonder when he will have done preaching," he replied in an under tone, but so as to be distinctly audible throughout the house, "When I am made "a bishop, my lord." He was a persuasive orator, —excelling alike in raillery and denunciation. His application of Cato's *Delenda est Carthago* to the commercial Republic of Holland was eminently felicitous, though it gave the municipality of Amsterdam, when he fled to that city, opportunity for a magnanimous retort: "Ab nostra Carthagine, nondum deleta, salutem accipe." His Puritanic training sometimes communicated a scriptural quaintness and picturesqueness to his polished raillery. "We have a "little sister," he exclaimed, when speaking of the Protestantism of the Continent, "and she hath "no breasts; what shall we do for our sister on "the day when she shall be spoken for? If she "be a wall, we will build on her a palace of silver; "if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards "of cedar." When the prodigality of Charles to his mistresses was being discussed, he observed, "If I must speak of them, I shall say as the "prophet did to Saul: *What meaneth this bleating*

" *of the cattle?* And I hope the King will make the
" same answer: *That he reserves them for sacri-*
" *fice, and means to deliver them up to please his*
" *people.*" Yet with all these rare gifts, Shaftesbury was an eminently dangerous man. He had a passionate craving for the excitement of political intrigue. When in office he could afford to be just and moderate; but whenever he went into opposition, he was eager to embark in the wildest and most daring adventures. On giving up the seals, he said, " It is only laying down my gown, "and putting on my sword." Dryden, in the preface to *The Medal*, advised the Whigs never to own the bottom of their principles, "for fear " they should be treason;" and the sarcasm was peculiarly applicable to the fearless and intrepid intellect of their leader. " The worst title makes "the best king," was the argument by which he supported the pretensions of Monmouth. Such a man, had he been less fickle and unsteady, would have made a great and successful party leader. He was the very genius of faction. North attempts to show that his whole life was a consistent intrigue against the Crown; but the popular nickname, " My Lord Shiftsbury," correctly indicates the instability of his public conduct. He was governed, indeed, by two diametrically opposite forces. He was a patrician demagogue. His speeches on behalf of demo-

cracy, even those addressed to the Parliaments of the Protectorate, are the speeches of a natural aristocrat. This is the man upon whom Dryden has lavished his richest and most splendid invective. It is none the less effective because we see that the poet, like the rest of the world, had been unable to resist the subtle charm of that exquisite and noble address, and that he loves even while he chastises. For the scandal which imputes the introduction of a passage of qualified eulogy into the second edition of *Absalom and Achitophel*, is altogether undeserving of credit. The motive which induced Dryden, apart from the genuine admiration which he felt for Shaftesbury's versatile genius, to introduce this eulogium, was clearly a different motive. The artist knew that an air of judicial fairness, while softening the acrimony, would increase the weight of his censure.

Such was John Dryden's life. It is a life where neither the heroic constancy of the martyr, nor the imaginative seclusion and loftiness of the idealist, have any place. But it is one not less interesting to those who are not afraid to look closely, yet fairly and temperately, at human nature. For it is the life of a great man who descended into the arena, who mixed with the crowd, who drudged painfully for daily bread,

who, in an unpropitious and unhappy age, was forced to keep body and soul together as he best might. That after half a century of ignoble and ill-requited toil he retained a youthful ingenuousness and purity of soul, need not be maintained. But that an evil life had destroyed his manliness, his sincerity, his kindly heart, his natural generosity of temper, and had converted him into a sordid knave and hypocritical adventurer, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage and his master for thirty pieces of silver, is a view which is refuted by the clearest evidence, internal and external, and which we may safely refuse to entertain.

HENRY ST JOHN

"Come then, my friend! my genius! come along,
O master of the poet and the song!
And while the Muse now stoops, or now ascends,
To man's low passions or their glorious ends,
Teach me, like thee in various nature wise,
To fall with dignity, with temper rise;
Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer
From grave to gay, from lively to severe;
Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
Intent to reason, or polite to please.
Oh! while along the stream of time thy name
Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,
Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale?
When statesmen, heroes, kings in dust repose,
Whose sons shall blush their father were thy foes,
Shall then this verse to future age pretend
Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend?"

POPE'S *Essay on Man.*

HENRY ST. JOHN.

LORD BOLINGBROKE concludes his famous letter to Sir William Wyndham by declaring that he is not solicitous for an acquittal, either from his own or from future times. "As to the opinion of mankind in general, and the judgment which posterity will pass on these matters, I am under no great concern—*Suum cuique decus posteritas rependit.*" Posterity has taken him at his word. The memory of St. John has been assailed down to our own days with peculiar virulence and an astonishing unanimity of dislike. Some respect is due to the universal opinion of mankind; and, at the present moment especially, a dangerous anxiety prevails to substitute individual crotchets for the unimpeached traditions of centuries. The intricate and perplexing relations of Henry VIII. with the Reformation deserve, and have received, grave and attentive reconsideration; but we can only smile when we are informed by Mr. Chadwick, in his life of Daniel Defoe, that our religion and liberties have been preserved by Providence

and the Duchess of Marlborough. Yet there are circumstances connected with Bolingbroke's political career which should make us accept the opinion of the majority with reserve, if not with distrust. We can write with temper of the latter days of the Empire, or of the constitutions of the Mediæval Republics; but the reign of Anne still rouses and enlists the passions of partisans. And Bolingbroke has been impartially assailed by every party. It was his misfortune to incur the resentment of the Whigs, and the resentment of the Tories. He was attacked by the friends of the Revolution and by the enemies of the Revolution, by the Nonjurors and by the Presbyterian Dissenters, by Williamites and by Jacobites, by Atterbury and by Defoe. The Whigs, he himself declared, had done all they could to expose him for a fool, and to brand him for a knave; and though the Tories had not impeached him for treason to the state, they had impeached him for treason to themselves. "That last burst of the cloud," he exclaimed, "has gone near to overwhelm me." There are some open questions in our Histories as in our Cabinets; and the character of Bolingbroke may still be regarded as an open·question—and not improperly. At all events, the writer who maintains that Henry St. John was abler and honester than most of his contemporaries, is not necessarily ventilating a caprice, or airing a paradox.

The indictment against Bolingbroke is a lengthy document. He was a violent and vindictive politician. He served no master faithfully. He was false to the house of Hanover. He was false to the house of Stuart. He intrigued against his best friends—against Marlborough who had raised him to office, against Harley who kept him in it. The only legacy which the statesman bequeathed to his country was a shameful and disastrous peace. His literary works do not redeem his reputation; they are brilliant in style, but the sentiment is affected, and the reflections are tawdry and commonplace. He was an unbeliever. He led a dissolute life. There was no soundness in him, no fairness of judgment, no fixity of principle. From its beginning to its close, his career was essentially meretricious. And an ambitious and profligate manhood fitly culminated in a miserable old age.

There can be little doubt that this estimate is to some extent correct. I believe, indeed, that the notices of his excesses which have reached us have been pretty highly coloured; the picture of a rake at one time administering with vigour the affairs of an empire, at another toying with his mistress, at another presiding over a bacchanalian orgy, has been industriously repeated since Tacitus drew Petronius; and the truth probably is, that St. John's private life was not wilder than the lives of most of

his contemporaries. Most of his contemporaries used profane oaths, treated the other sex with improper levity, and drank a great deal more claret than was good for them. It cannot be maintained that, in an age of licence, St. John was in any sense an ascetic. He drank, in his earlier years at least, nearly as hard as the solemn and blameless Harley. He could chat with a pretty orange-girl at the door of the theatre, or with a lively actress in short petticoats behind the scenes. Goldsmith says that Miss Gumley was the most extravagant young lady in town, and St. John's name was coupled with Miss Gumley's. But his excesses did not cloud his intellect nor harden his heart. He was good-natured. He was a kind master. He liked children. He zealously assisted his brothers. Old Mrs. Delany used to relate how, as a little girl, she had gone with the great Lord Bolingbroke to the puppet-show to see the fight between Punch and the Pig (a travesty on Nicolini's fight with the lion in Hydaspes), and how she had sat on his lap. It is said that he did not behave well to his first wife, but she loved him faithfully notwithstanding, and could not bear to hear evil things spoken of her lord. "I am more insipid and dull than ever," she writes to Swift, "except in some places, and there I am a little fury, especially if they dare mention my dear lord without respect, which sometimes hap-

pens,"—happens not unfrequently doubtless, as the letter was not written until after his fall. To his second wife, the Marquise de Villette, he was devotedly attached; and the Marquise repaid his constancy by a tender fidelity, which only burned warmer and brighter as the shadows lengthened and the night drew near. It is unlikely that he could have secured and retained the regard of two high-spirited and intelligent women, if his nature had been utterly corrupted. He was a delightful companion. With Pope and Swift, and Prior and Gay, and Peterborough and Arbuthnot around him, the handsome secretary threw off the cares of office. He unbent wholly. "Harry" was the most brilliant member of the brilliant society which enjoyed "Mat's" airy pleasantries, and "Jonathan's" solemn jests. Pope loved him better than he loved any other human being except his mother and Gay; and he has embalmed his name in the finest and most splendid flattery. Few English statesmen, indeed, have had such associates. Of no other English statesman can it be said, as of St. John, that he charmed away the gloomy wrath of Swift, and was regarded by Pope with fanatical ardour.

Even his enemies have admitted that St. John was a man of brilliant powers. He was a great natural orator. Nor was he a great speaker only; he wrote the English language with remarkable

purity and energy. And, in several respects, it cannot be denied, he was sound as well as brilliant. On many subjects of national concern his views were large and sagacious. The Tory leader was the first of the free traders. The liberal commercial policy which he tried to introduce was defeated by the ignorance and the bigotry of his political foes; but his letters on the subject still exist, and vindicate the soundness of his judgment, and his lofty superiority to sectarian prejudices. "I believe it will be of use," he writes to the Duke of Shrewsbury, the English ambassador at Paris during the period when the treaty of peace was being negotiated, "to insinuate to Monsieur de Tercy that as, among other things, the factious people here intend, by their opposition to the settlement of any trade with France, to keep the nations estranged from each other, to cultivate the prejudices which have been formerly raised, and which, during two long wars, have taken deep root, and also to prevent the wearing of them out, which would be the natural necessary consequence of an open advantageous trade; so we on our part, and the ministers of France on theirs, ought to counteract their designs, and to finish what relates to commerce more in the character of statesmen than of merchants." These words were written in the reign of Anne, and not in the reign of Victoria;

they are the words, not of Richard Cobden, but of Henry St. John.

Let us now look a little more closely at some of the more characteristic incidents of his singular career.

The first Parliament of the eighteenth century met at Westminster on the 6th of February 1701. William's war with France had been terminated a year or two previously by the treaty of Ryswick. There was a lull in the storm; but the sword had been unwillingly returned to its scabbard; and it was obvious that, whenever the combatants had breathed themselves, the conflict would be renewed. The Whig Junto—Somers, Montague, Wharton—had been dismissed during the previous autumn, and Godolphin and Marlborough were in power. Godolphin had held office almost constantly since the Restoration. He was silent, discreet, industrious: he was a perfect man of business; he had no opinions; he had been as useful to James as he had been to Charles, and as useful to William as he had been to James. Thirty years previously he had married Margaret Blagge, one of Queen Katherine's maids of honour—a pure and innocent girl, who, amid a dissolute society, contrived to preserve her fair name unspotted.* She wrote to

* The Life of Mrs. Godolphin, by John Evelyn of Wooton, Esq. Edited by Samuel, Lord Bishop of Oxford, 1848.

Evelyn in one of the earliest of her quaint and delightful letters, that the heart of her husband had been touched by the divine grace, and that both of them earnestly desired to leave the Court, and settle somewhere in the country, remote from the entanglements of the world. She was soon removed from these entanglements; for she died in childbed; and her husband, unspeakably afflicted, laid her in the remote village church of Breague, in the parish of Godolphin in Cornwall, where the Godolphins had lived since the Conquest. He had since her death worked hard for a quarter of a century; not very desirous apparently to be released from the entanglements of office; and was now Lord High Treasurer and a Knight of the Garter. The reputation which he had won was not exactly the reputation which Margaret Blagge would have coveted. Sidney Godolphin was a favourite subject with the wits and poets of his day. Swift, in airy and graceful *badinage*, compared the white rod of the High Treasurer to the rod of Moses which became a devouring serpent, to the broomstick on which the witch rides to her midnight revel ("but with the morning dawn resumes the peaceful state of common brooms"), to the rod of Hermes, and to a Newmarket switch. The sceptre of Achilles, "down from ancestors divine, transmitted to the hero's line," was a sapless twig; but the rod of the charmer, who could

count upon the votes of the English Commons, was full of juice, shooting in golden boughs and golden fruit,—

> "And he, the Dragon never sleeping,
> Guarded each fair Hesperian pippin."

And Pope, when discoursing upon the inconsistencies of human nature, expressed his surprise that the man whose comprehensive head and uncorrupted heart had saved Europe, yet had left England unbetrayed, should pride himself more highly upon his skill at picquet, or upon his tact at a bet, than upon his career as a minister. Marlborough, though he still affected to coquet with St. Germains, had succeeded in obtaining the confidence of William, and held a chief, if not the chief place, in the Godolphin Cabinet.

Henry St. John was among the members who, in 1701, entered the House of Commons for the first time. He was descended from a patrician house, and the blood of his family had mingled with the Tudors. He could laugh at Harley, when Harley, "in vain discourses over his claret," boasted of the renown of his ancestry; yet St. John was proud of his descent; and, on this score, even Swift sometimes condescended to flatter him. "My birth, although from a family not undistinguished in its time, is many degrees inferior to yours." In the civil wars, though both Cavalier and Puritan

soldiers had issued from the house, the St. Johns had inclined to side with the Parliament; and the loyal Clarendon declared that they were "a mutinous family." Henry St. John was now in his twenty-third year. He had been at Eton with Robert Walpole, and at Christ Church when the Phalaris controversy was fluttering the dons of that aristocratic seat of letters. He had afterwards travelled on the Continent, residing for some time in Paris, where he became acquainted with Matthew Prior. He had sat at the feet of Dryden, and heard the old man, trembling with nervous excitement, repeat the famous Ode to St. Cecilia, the morning after it was composed. As a boy, he had been forward and reckless; he was now renowned for his "frantic bacchanals." At length the House of Commons was open to him, and he carried into that famous assembly the wit and the passion which had delighted, and sometimes subdued, these fevered revellers. He might now become, as he aspired to be, the Petronius of his age.

St. John quickly acquired the favour of the House, for he possessed in a high degree the peculiar talents which are fitted to charm an assembly at once popular and patrician. He was tall, well-made, of a handsome and gallant presence. The aquiline nose, the dark brown hair, the winning smile, the lofty forehead, the eager and piercing

expression of the eyes, are alluded to by many of his contemporaries. Wigs, powdered or unpowdered, were then generally worn; but St. John never adopted the fashion, and continued, even in advanced life, to wear his unpowdered hair in negligent curls, tied back with a long streaming ribbon. His manners were frank and cordial, and his wit was ready. But he was pre-eminently an orator. Possessing the instinct which enables a speaker to bring himself into sympathy with his audience, skilful in detecting the weak points of an adversary's argument, skilful in concealing the weak points of his own, ready, adroit, intrepid, St. John was, by his constitution, a parliamentary debater. And to these gifts he added others scarcely less essential—a finished delivery, a fervid logic, a curious felicity of expression; above all, a capacity for prolonged and trenchant invective. He could rebuke, and he could ridicule. He was passionate, and he was ironical. His scorn tempered his passion, and his passion gave a glow to his scorn. He became a power in St. Stephen's before he had been a year within its walls. He assailed Montague, he assailed Wharton, he assailed Somers; and the country squires listened with open ears, cheered him lustily, and ranged themselves under his banner. Such a master of invective had never before sat in the House of Commons; and it may be doubted whether any one, with the single ex-

ception of Mr. Disraeli, equally renowned in the fine but dangerous science of parliamentary fence, has sat there since.

During the four years that elapsed between St. John's election and his appointment to office, the Commons and the army were busily engaged,—the army attacking the French, the Commons assailing Whig Ministers and Presbyterian Dissenters. William was dead; Anne had succeeded to the throne, and Marlborough was at the head of the Allies,—sordidly parsimonious while lavishing the lives of men, and the wealth of a nation. Somers and Halifax had been impeached and acquitted, and the Occasional Conformity Bill continued to be vigorously passed by the Commons and vigorously rejected by the Lords. The Occasional Conformity Bill, which occupies so large a space in the history of these years, was intended to restrain a practice which had become habitual with the opulent Dissenters who aspired to civic office. They could not become Sheriffs or Lord Mayors, until they had partaken of the sacrament of the Supper according to the rites of the Church of England; and this many of them had been in the habit of doing, as matter of form, when elected. The bill provided that these evasions of the law should be punished by heavy fines. If a Dissenter went to church once, he might continue to do so, and keep his place; but

he must take the consequences if he chose to return to the conventicle. The controversy occasioned by this bill led to the publication of Defoe's most famous pamphlet, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters.* Defoe was a Dissenter, but he was not a Dissenter of the opulent school; and he could consistently hold that to receive the sacrament merely as a qualification for civic honours was a scandalous practice, and 'a playing at bo-peep with God Almighty.' Thus the peculiar irony of this *jeu d'esprit* is to be ascribed to its author's peculiar and rather isolated position. He killed two birds with one stone. He disapproved of the persecuting policy of the Church; he disapproved of the dishonourable tactics of Dissent; and he rebuked both. The spirit of martyrdom, he said, was over. Men who would go to church to be chosen sheriffs and mayors, would go to forty churches rather than be hanged. If one severe law were passed and punctually executed, that whoever was found at a conventicle should be banished the nation, and the preacher be hanged, the unity desired would be speedily secured. But the light and foolish handling of Dissenters by fines of 1s. a-week or 5s. a-month, was an offence against God and the Commonwealth. "This is such a shame to a Christian government, that 'tis with regret I transmit it to posterity." Nothing can be more felicitous than

the gravity and earnestness with which the proposition is supported. The irony, in fact, was not altogether ironical. The main object, no doubt, was the defence of religious liberty; but this object was reached by a serious attack on those who were threatened with persecution, as well as by a sarcastic defence of those who were anxious to persecute. I shall do what I can, the writer in effect observed, to save the citadel, though I have doubts whether the garrison are worth the trouble of saving, or whether, in fact, it would not be better for them, and for everybody else, that they fell into the hands of the enemy. The genuine scorn which he felt gave that edge to his pen, and that seriousness to his air, which deceived friends and foes alike. For a long time the Sacheverells of the Church rejoiced over this vigorous defender of the faith. When they found him out, they put him in the pillory.

St. John's name is to be found on the back of this, and on several other bills of doubtful fame. His position was already determined. He had become the brilliant mouthpiece of a violent faction before Godolphin and Marlborough found a place for him in the administration. At twenty-five he was made Secretary at War. He forthwith devoted himself to the duties of his office; and it is admitted on all hands, that when in office he worked assiduously. Both at this time, and

afterwards when Secretary of State, he transacted an immense amount of business. He performed, in fact, nearly the whole work of the Harley Administration; he corresponded with foreign ambassadors; he wrote leaders for *The Examiner;* he directed the tactics of the party; he bore the burden of debate. His nature was extremely elastic; his temper was cheerful; he had a quick apprehension, and saw at once what was material in any business which he had on hand. "Lord Peterborough," Pope remarked, "would say very pretty and lively things in his letters, but they would be rather too gay and wandering; whereas, were Lord Bolingbroke to write to an emperor or to a statesman, he would fix on that point which was the most material, would place it in the strongest and finest light, and manage it so as to make it most serviceable for his purpose." He held the office of Secretary during a stirring time,—when the conquering French army was being beaten back upon its frontier; when Blenheim and Ramillies were being won; when captured standards were being carried, amid the acclamations of the people, from Westminster to St. Paul's. It was a time to test the capacity of a Secretary at War; and St. John's administrative tact, his luminous expositions in Parliament, the ease with which he dealt with votes, and figures, and estimates, more than satisfied the expectations

which had been raised. Even Marlborough, with unwonted generosity, admitted that he had been zealously aided by his youthful colleague. He left office a perfect man of business.

He left office because the Godolphin Cabinet had become a Whig Cabinet. The policy of the administration had been essentially a war policy; and the Tories had never heartily liked the war. Godolphin found himself more eagerly supported by his political foes than by his political friends; and an alliance between the minister and the chiefs of the Opposition was gradually formed. When it had been consummated, Harley and St. John—the leaders of the pure Tories—withdrew from the government. But they had sown the seeds of discord before they left. St. John had always disliked the imperious Duchess of Marlborough. "Now, thanks be to God," he exclaimed, when the final rupture between the Queen and her friend took place, "that fury who broke loose to execute the vengeance of Heaven on a sinful people is restrained, and the royal hand is reached out to chain up that plague." Harley had taken care to conciliate the new favourite—Mrs. Masham—and Mrs. Masham zealously exerted her influence with her royal mistress in Harley's behalf. The consequence was, that when the Tories, in 1708, seceded from the government, the Queen was ready to dismiss Godolphin, and to put the white

staff into the hands of his rival, at the earliest possible opportunity.

The opportunity was found in 1711. A foolish parson had preached a foolish discourse on the doctrine of non-resistance. The logical consequences of the doctrine of non-resistance were, that the glorious Revolution was a rebellion, and that the crown of James II. had transmitted, *jure divino*, to his son. The Whig majority in the Commons determined to impeach the offender;* and articles of impeachment were accordingly prepared and carried up to the Lords. The trial lasted for many days. The Queen attended; and the Duchess of Marlborough has left an amusing account of "a scene" which occurred behind the curtain which divided the royal party from the House. The populace were roused. One assemblage proclaimed that the Church was in danger. Another assemblage denounced the tyranny of the Commons. Dr. Johnson's father, who was an old bookseller, told his son that the books which had been most eagerly read in his time were the *Absalom and Achitophel* of Dryden, and the account of the Trial of Dr. Sacheverell.

* Swift, in *The History of the Four Last Years of the Queen*, says, that the prosecution was urged by Godolphin, who "took fire at a nickname (Volpone) delivered by Dr. Sacheverell, with great indiscretion, from the pulpit, which he applied to himself."

Even to-day the trial may be read with interest. The prolonged discussions between the counsel for the accused and the managers of the impeachment are curiously characteristic. The one side essayed to prove, the other to disprove, that the doctrine of non-resistance was the doctrine of the Church of England. The proceedings are as full of extracts from the writings of divines, and from the decrees of Synods, as is Mr. Stephens' speech on behalf of Dr. Rowland Williams. The authority of the Oxford decrees, the wretched scandal on Monmouth's scaffold, the opinions of the great dignitaries of the Church, were successively invoked. At length the House of Lords solemnly condemned Dr. Sacheverell. But the majority was small, and the punishment was light. The result was hailed as a great Church triumph. It was also a great Tory triumph. Bolingbroke, indeed, expressed profound contempt for the "vain, froward, and turbulent preacher," whose frothy declamation had roused the passions of the nation; yet it was Sacheverell who brought St. John into office. "You had a sermon to condemn," he wrote to Walpole, years afterwards, "and a parson to roast; for that, I think, was the decent language of the time, but—to carry on the allegory —you roasted him at so fierce a fire that you burnt yourselves." The Whigs in the Commons were profoundly chagrined. When the message from

the Lords, stating that they were prepared to give judgment in the case of Dr. Sacheverell, was brought down, many members spoke against demanding judgment; and the Tories, who had consistently opposed the proceedings, were on this occasion joined by several who had hitherto been most forward in the prosecution. These members held that the judgment which the Peers proposed to pronounce, and the purport of which had been allowed to escape, was ridiculously and scandalously lenient, and they thought that the Commons would best consult their dignity and evince their displeasure by declining to attend. The vote of thanks to the managers was not carried without strong opposition. A member, whose name has not been recorded, probably gave expression to the Tory exultation when he ironically remarked, that though he was against giving the managers thanks, he thought one reason in favour of doing so had not been stated. The managers should be thanked by the Commons, because it was certain that they would have thanks nowhere else. The motion was carried by a majority of fifty only; and the whole of the managers, Mr. Dolben excepted, voted in the majority. The expression of popular feeling was too strong to be misconstrued. It was obvious that the Tory and Church party had the nation behind them, and would carry the elections,

Anne at once dismissed Godolphin, and called Harley and St. John to office.*

St. John was the real chief of the Harley Administration. Upon the sagacity and energy which he displayed as Secretary of State between 1711 and 1714, his reputation as an administrator, as the efficient leader of a party, must mainly depend. I am of opinion that an impartial inquiry into his conduct during those years must terminate favourably. He is entitled to a "good deliverance." If after all, indeed, we must come to the conclusion that whilst manifesting tact, skill, resolution, patience, intrepidity, he was sometimes rash, sometimes passionate, and sometimes intemperate, it may be right to remember, at the same time, that, when entrusted with the government of a great nation, St. John was only thirty-two.

The policy of the Harley Administration may be easily defined. The ministers desired to terminate the war, and to organise and consolidate the party which supported them.

The war had lasted for ten years. It was called the war of the Spanish Succession; but, in so far as this country was concerned, it was a war occasioned by the impolitic courtesy which Louis the Great had, on the death of James II., paid to

* The best edition of the Trial of Dr. Sacheverell is that published by Tonson in 1711—"printed by order of the House of Lords."

his son. It may be that the English nation were right to resent an act partly dictated by caprice and partly by chivalry; but ten years of blood, of desolation, and of triumph, were enough to cool the smart of a verbal impertinence. It had become clear, moreover, that the ostensible objects for which the war was entered upon could not be attained. The war had ceased to be a war of dynasties—a simple question between the eagles of Hapsburg and the lilies of France. The Spaniards, long indifferent, had at last been roused, and had identified themselves with the Bourbons. Philip was no longer an alien; he was their own king; and the reverses which they had sustained together had endeared him to them. The settlement of Spain, according to the diplomatic programme, was become a dream; and it had become so mainly by reason of the early victories which the allies had achieved on Spanish soil. But the ruling party in England would listen to no compromise. William was dead; but his energetic hatred of France had been bequeathed to the Whigs. The chief magistrate of the Dutch Commonwealth might well believe that animosity to the Grand Monarch was a religious duty. French armies had desolated these fertile plains; French armies had sacked these populous cities. The Dutch had never been subdued; but more than once they had been driven back into the sea.

English statesmen, however, were in a different position, and an alliance between the Western powers had long been a favourite idea with the Tories. St. John felt the force of these considerations, and of others not less urgent to a party leader. The war was a Whig war. It was Marlborough's war. So long as the war continued Churchill was the virtual chief of the grand alliance, and the most powerful subject in Europe. It was hard to say to what he might not aspire. He had once, indeed, in terms somewhat too peremptory, required Anne to make him Captain-General for life. Addison's *Cato* was produced upon the stage soon after the great soldier's dismissal. Its political allusions were received by both parties with tumults of applause; but Bolingbroke adroitly turned its edge against the friends of its author. At the end of the performance he called Booth into the stage-box, and presenting him with a purse containing fifty guineas, publicly thanked him for so well defending the cause of liberty against a perpetual dictator. It was not to be wondered at, therefore, that Marlborough should not be unduly anxious to conclude a peace. But, in truth, had he not shown undue anxiety to protract the war? Had not Louis offered liberal terms of accommodation—terms which reasonable men would have willingly accepted? And had not the area of the war been

recklessly extended by the Whigs, when they declared in a parliamentary resolution, that neither Spain nor the Indies should ever belong to a Bourbon? Bolingbroke had no desire to see France dismembered. On the contrary, he was anxious to be on good terms with our nearest neighbour; to eradicate national animosities; and by a commercial union, "undertaken more in the character of statesmen than of merchants," to bind the two nations firmly together. Moreover, he detested Austria. Austria was the evil genius of England. He never thought of the conduct of that family, he said, without recollecting the image of the man braiding a rope of hay, which his ass bites off at the other end. England had only a subordinate interest in the contest; England was fighting the Emperor's battles: yet England voluntarily bore the heat and burden of the day. Entertaining these views, it cannot be matter of surprise that St. John should have resolved to terminate the war.

He had many obstacles to overcome. The war was popular. The thirst for blood, long gratified, had not been slaked. It was difficult to content allies who, after Marlborough's triumphant progress, anticipated the flight of Louis and the sack of Paris. But St. John's invincible resolve triumphed over every difficulty. The French envoy wrote to his master, that, in a timid

and wavering council, St. John was the one decisive man. His colleagues were unnerved by the delicacy of the position and the magnitude of the stake; but the Secretary did not hesitate. His intrepid spirit never quailed. The House of Lords pronounced against the peace. For some days it seemed probable that the ministry would be impeached. Swift thought that the game was up. He told Harley with grim humour that he would have the advantage of the minister; for whereas the Lord Treasurer would lose his head, *he* would only be hanged, and so take his body entire to the grave. St. John alone preserved his composure. He assured the Dean that there was no cause for alarm. The Duke of Ormond, who commanded in Flanders, was ordered on no pretence to risk an engagement. A batch of Tory peers was created. The Whig majority was overawed. After many delays the peace of Utrecht was signed. St John's courageous pertinacity was rewarded by a great, if not quite untarnished, success. "It is the Lord's work," he exclaimed, echoing the words of Elizabeth, when she heard that her sister was dead; "it is the Lord's work, and it is marvellous in our eyes." "I never look back," he said long afterwards, "on this great event, past as it is, without a secret emotion of mind." The peace was not perhaps the peace which an ambitious soldier or an

implacable partisan would have concluded. It did not provide for various remote eventualities. Nor did it protect the Catalans,—an ungenerous omission, for which St. John, however, does not appear to have been responsible.* It was bitterly denounced. Its author was attainted. But St. John was firmly persuaded that the work was one of which any statesman might be proud. "I tell you without any gasconade," he wrote to Peterborough, "that I would rather be banished for my whole life because I helped to make the peace, than be raised to the highest honours for having obstructed it." His judgment has been signally approved. Even Lord Macaulay allows that the peace was a just and necessary peace. "We are therefore for the peace of Utrecht," he says emphatically.

St. John's next object was to consolidate his party. It need not be denied that he was a thoroughgoing partisan. He tried hard to make Toryism supreme in the State. He left Marlborough when Marlborough became a Whig. He quarrelled with Harley when Harley's trifling

* Bolingbroke, in fact, was urgent and pertinacious upon the point. Throughout the negotiations he had insisted on the introduction of an article as to the position of the Catalans, and near their close he wrote to Strafford, "Your Lordship will continue to insist on those terms, that the Catalans be restored to their ancient privileges, and we will carry the point."

imperilled the safety of his party. The violent measures of the Government against the Dissenters and the Opposition were dictated by similar motives. Anne was a Tory, but the Successor (as the Elector used to be called in the political pamphlets of the day) was attached to the opposite party. It was known that whenever he succeeded to the throne he was prepared, if permitted, to place the Government of the country in the hands of "the Revolution families." It was Bolingbroke's object to deprive him of this power. It was necessary, therefore, before the accession of the Hanover dynasty, that the Tories should be made all-powerful. They must command the Church, the Parliament, and the Army. The Church had long been a hotbed of Toryism: the party had an effective majority in the Commons; the Whig majority in the Lords had been diminished by the creation of Tory peers; and at the time of Anne's death the Army was commanded by a Tory Captain-General, and extensive changes had been effected among the subordinate officials. This is the true explanation of the policy which Bolingbroke so unsparingly pursued. He was never a Jacobite at heart; but the bulk of the party which he led were obstinately disloyal. The Church contained many Sacheverells; the great Tory magnates, like Ormond and Mar, corresponded with Saint Germains; the county

squires talked treason in their cups. St. John's position, consequently, was one of peculiar nicety. He felt instinctively that the Stuarts could not be restored. Their day of grace was past. The Revolution was an accomplished fact. He desired his party to accept it as such, and to take their stand upon principles which were consistent with success. He tried to wean them from the Stuart, and to reconcile them to the Hanoverian dynasty, by the tempting baubles of office. What Peel and Disraeli have done for the territorial party in the nineteenth century, was attempted by Bolingbroke at the beginning of the eighteenth. Had Anne lived six months longer, it is possible that his design might have succeeded. But she died, or rather ate herself to death, before the plot was ripe. The Whigs took advantage of the suspicion of disloyalty which attached to the Tory party and to its chiefs, to bring the Elector to the kingdom "in a storm," and to disable and attaint their opponents. The result might have been foreseen. The disloyal were strengthened; the loyal and neutral were disheartened. The Tories, to a man, went over to the Chevalier. Bolingbroke was forced to acquiesce. The party had escaped from his controul, and, fired with anger and thirsting for revenge, had adopted a policy of which he had always disapproved, and from which he hoped little. He

himself became the minister of the Pretender. But the soundness of the instinct which had led him to despair of Jacobitism was quickly vindicated. He found that the madness with which the gods afflict those who are ready to perish, had fallen upon the ill-starred son of an ill-starred house. Bolingbroke was a Jacobite for about six months. The whole of his after-life was devoted to teaching his party the lesson which he had striven, but had failed, to teach them in the earlier part of his career, and the wisdom of which experience and suffering had so bitterly brought home to himself. "Men of the best sense," he said of the Pretender, with all the energy of conviction, "find it hard to overcome religious prejudices, which are of all the strongest; but *he* is a slave to the weakest. The rod hangs like the sword of Damocles over his head, and he trembles before his mother and his priest. What, in the name of God, can any member of the Church of England promise himself from such a character?"

Such were the tactics of the Harley Administration—tactics which could only have been carried to a successful issue by adroit and not over-scrupulous men. But most of the politicians of that age were adroit and unscrupulous. It must be added, likewise, that they were violent and cruel. The ferocity which characterised the

public life of England at the beginning of last century can scarcely be realised in these tamer times. It was not enough to dismiss a minister from office—it was necessary to impeach and attaint him. The Commons had impeached Somers and Halifax for the partition treaties. They impeached Oxford and Bolingbroke for the treaty of Utrecht. They brought Sacheverell to the bar of the Lords for preaching against rebellion; they sent Walpole to the Tower for fraud and embezzlement; even Marlborough did not feel that he was safe from their displeasure. Party feeling never ran higher in the metropolis than during the years when St. John was in office. The faction which had been displaced were furious; the faction which had triumphed were implacable. The great nobles who frequented the Kit-cat bitterly resented the intrigues which had driven them from power; the country squires who met at the October clamoured for the heads of the men who had ruined the country by French wars and Dutch finance, and who had tried to ruin the Church. The spirit of faction penetrated into every society. The Tory wits and poets assailed the wits and poets of the Whigs. The Tory great ladies wore their patches in one fashion; the Whig great ladies wore theirs in another. The Tories occupied one side of the opera-house; the other was occupied by the Whigs. The Churchills

and the Somersets belonged to the Opposition, and could be distinguished from the beauties who adorned the Court by their muffs, their fans, and their furbelows. The Tory Rosalind looked coldly on her gallant if he went into the wrong lobby. The Whig Juliet threw Romeo over, if Romeo persisted in attending the Treasurer's levees, or in dining with Mr. Secretary St. John.* The city was divided into two hostile camps, and quarter was neither asked nor given. Nowhere was the antagonism keener than in the coffee-houses which the wits frequented. Nor was this to be wondered at; for the pen of every wit who could write his name had been hired by the Government or by the Opposition. Steele, Addison, and Defoe were arrayed on the left; St. John, Swift, and Prior on the right of the chair. A year or two previously, when St. John was living in retirement at Buklersbury, the

* See *The Examiner* (by Swift), No. 32. Addison, in No. 81 of the *Spectator*, has a charming paper on the patching question. The one party patched on the right side of the forehead, the other on the left. The censorious affirm, he says, that in some cases, the patches turn to the right or to the left, according to the principles of the man who is most in favour. "But whatever may be the motives of a few fantastical coquettes, who do not patch for the public good so much as for their own private advantage, it is certain that there are several women of honour who patch out of principle, and with an eye to the interest of their country."—June 2, 1711.

whole town had been thrown into convulsions of laughter by Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff's whimsical assaults upon Partridge, the almanack-maker. Mr. Bickerstaff was an astrologer himself, but he did not believe in Partridge's astrology. Mr. Bickerstaff had recently made certain astral observations, and a few of these—predictions for the ensuing year—he would now venture to communicate to the public. The first was but a trifle, he said, yet he would mention it to show how ignorant these sottish pretenders to astrology were in their own concerns. It was that Partridge should die on the 29th of March next, about eleven o'clock at night, of a raging fever. "Therefore I advise him to consider of it, and settle his affairs in time." Then came an account, in a letter to a person of honour, of the death of Mr. Partridge, the almanack-maker, on the 29th inst. This was followed by a pamphlet, in which Partridge explicitly denied that he was dead, and complained of the inconvenience to which he had been put by the announcement. The subject was closed by a philosophical rejoinder from Mr. Bickerstaff, in which he demonstrated that it was morally impossible that Partridge could be alive. "He hath been indeed so wise to make no objection against the truth of my predictions, except in one single point relating to himself; and to demonstrate how much men are blinded by their

own partiality, I do solemnly assure the reader that he is the only person from whom I have heard that objection offered; which consideration alone, I think, will take off all its weight."* Swift's admirable wit never shone brighter than in these famous pleasantries. In them it is utterly without acidity—arch, cheery, and frolicsome. Yet the logic is as exact, as sinewy, as concise, as is the logic of his most elaborate treatises. He breaks Partridge upon a wheel which might move a mountain. Seldom, indeed, do we see Swift with so bright a smile on his face; the wit and the logic, indeed, are always

* The *Elegy on Partridge*,—

> Who to the stars in pure good will
> Does to his best look upward still,—

is an admirable fragment of poetic *badinage*.

> Strange an astrologer should die
> Without one wonder in the sky!
> Not one of all his crony stars
> To pay their duty at his hearse!
> No meteor, no eclipse appeared;
> No comet with a flaming beard!
> The sun has rose and gone to bed
> Just as if Partridge were not dead;
> Nor hid himself behind the moon,
> To make a dreadful night at noon.
> He at fit periods walks thro' Aries,
> Howe'er our earthly motion varies;
> And twice a-year he'll cut the equator,
> As if there had been no such matter.

present; but the later wit grows moody, and the ferocious energy of the logic indicates a mind that is ill at ease. Here, too, as in his other writings, his supreme simplicity is very noticeable. He wears no ornament; he is as naked as when he came from his mother's womb; simple wit and simple reason are his only weapons. But how the colourless diamond blade flashes when he wields it! Both Defoe and Swift—the two great controversialists of the time—wrote an extraordinarily homely style. But their homeliness was more persuasive than the most artful and sparkling rhetoric could have been. The one has persuaded us to believe in Robinson Crusoe; the other has persuaded us to believe in Lilliput and Brobdignag. And the choice of subject marks the difference between the men. The one created Robinson Crusoe by his hearty sympathy; the other created living Lilliputians and living Brobdignagians by his amazing logic. Both are admirably real; but the one is as true to nature as any man we meet in the street, the other is as true to nature as a mathematical figure. St. John told Swift—who, about the date of the Partridge controversy, had been accounted a Whig—that the Tories were determined to have him, as he was the only man of whom they were afraid. They did well to secure him. St. John's florid and fervid rhetoric for the senate, Swift's

plain, direct, and homely discourse for the people, worked wonders. They persuaded the nation that the Allies were dangerous friends; that the French did not wear wooden shoes; that taxes were unpleasant; and that it was right at all events to end the war. This was Swift's golden age. He liked to mix with the great; he liked to befriend his friends; he liked political controversy. All these good things he got during the last years of the Queen's reign. During these years, as Dr. Johnson says, it must be confessed that Swift formed the political opinions of the English nation. When Anne died, the Dean was forced to quit the chosen land that flowed with milk and honey. He crossed the Channel as if he were crossing the Styx. But that wonderful weapon which he carried about with him proved as resistless in Ireland as elsewhere. Soon he came to be its foremost man. "When people ask me how I governed Ireland," Lord Cartaret wrote, "I say that I pleased Dr. Swift.

'Quæsitam meritis sume superbiam.'"

But all his triumphs in Ireland would have been willingly exchanged for a single year of the reign of good Queen Anne,—"that real nursing mother of her people," as he called her in his last will,—for a smile from Lady Masham, or a nod from Bolingbroke.

At the time when St. John was raised to the peerage as Viscount Bolingbroke and Baron St. John, he was probably the most conspicuous man in Europe. His popularity was unbounded. He was the hero of the October Club, and mighty flagons were quaffed in his honour. When a new masque was to be produced at the Palace, the ladies-in-waiting (of whom the youngest of "Churchill's race," the beautiful Lady Mary, Duchess of Montagu, was one) contended for the honour of dressing the handsome Secretary. He went to Paris, and in Paris he was followed by crowds, fêted by princes, and carressed by the most charming women. When he entered the theatre during the performance of one of Corneille's tragedies, the play was interrupted, and the whole house rose to receive a statesman who was only five-and-thirty, but whose fame was European. There never was a more intoxicating position; himself a wit, a minister, a scholar, a man in every way of eminent capacity; wits, ministers, poets, beauties, princes, at his feet.

It seemed, too, that he was only at the beginning of his career. The chances were, that still more splendid, still more durable fortunes awaited him. For by this time he had learned to hate and to despise Harley. It is a mystery, indeed, how two men, so differently constituted, could have continued to be friends and colleagues for so many

years. The Secretary was clear-headed, decisive, energetic, intrepid, brilliant; the Treasurer was the idlest and iciest, the most reserved, most distrustful, and most confused of men. These whisperings on the staircase, these intrigues in the lobby, these vague hints of hidden intelligence, the utter want of decision, and the dilatoriness which perpetually embarrassed the delicate game which was being played, and which could not be played without tact, finesse, readiness, and the most fearless daring, must have maddened Bolingbroke. But though their rivalries were for long (as Swift complains) the entertainment of every coffeehouse, the Secretary did not finally break with his chief until he had supplanted him. The struggle was protracted. Oxford died hard. He was passionate and he was abject by turns. He clung to the hem of his mistress' robe. At the last council where the colleagues met, angry recriminations passed between them. But tears and reproaches were unavailing. That very night Oxford was dismissed.

For twenty-four hours Bolingbroke was Prime Minister of England. But his triumph was short-lived. The Queen had been present at the Council where these amenities had passed, and had been much shaken and agitated by the violence of her ministers. She declared that she could not recover the shock which she had received, and she was

not mistaken. On the first of August 1714, Anne breathed her last. Bolingbroke felt instinctively that his career was wrecked. "The Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday; the Queen died on Sunday. What a world is this, and how does fortune banter us!" Yet he did not give way to craven anticipations, nor to unmanly depression. He told Swift, ten days after the event, that the blow had not stunned him. "Adieu! love me, and love me better, because, after a greater blow than most men ever felt, I keep up my spirit; am neither dejected at what is past, nor apprehensive at what is to come. *Mea virtute me involvo.*"

In the course of a few months, Bolingbroke, an attainted fugitive, was the minister of a mimic Court.* It would be unprofitable to follow him to Commercy; I have already alluded to the motives which induced him to enter the Pretender's service. The alliance was short-lived; and it would have been well for Bolingbroke had it never

* Bolingbroke's flight to France was perhaps a blunder. It is probable, however, that, even, had he remained and defended himself, the Attainder Bill would have been carried. A number of motives induced him to fly,—the violence of the faction in power, the determination of the great body of the Tories to adopt the cause of the Pretender; but perhaps a reason assigned afterwards by himself had as much weight with a man of his passionate temperament as any of the others. "I could not bear," he said, referring to the proceedings which had been taken against his old colleague and himself, "to be joined with Oxford in any case."

been formed. His public career, in fact, was closed. The play had been played out. He had made one fatal blunder, and he was to eat the bitter fruit during the remainder of his life. His fall was great, and, spite of his gallant bearing, never wholly repaired. The great orator never again entered the famous assembly where Somers, and Halifax, and Shrewsbury guided the fortunes of the Commonwealth.

Though Bolingbroke was not vitally injured by his fall, and though he did not become gloomy or morose, yet the position was a trying one, especially to a man of his lofty and ardent temper. The lion was chained; the wings of the eagle had been clipped. We need not wonder, therefore, that his heart should sometimes have failed him; that hope should sometimes have deserted him; that he should have restlessly paced his narrow cell, and with folded hands mused moodily upon his wrecked career. But St. John's was an untameable nature. He accepted his fate with cheerfulness, if not with alacrity. He engaged in new pursuits. He busied himself with country pleasures. He read, he studied, he wrote. The statesman became a philosopher and an historian. The politician became the friend of scholars and the companion of poets.

St. John had always loved the country. He had voluntarily retired from public affairs during

the busiest period of his life. At that time he remained in retirement for two years,—pruning his peaches, watering his melons, hunting with the country squires, reading his Horace and his Tacitus, musing over the perplexing problems of human nature. His genius, he said, had wooed him to study and to reflect; but he had not heard the whispered invitation, "in the hurry of those passions by which I was transported." "Some calmer hours there were; in them I hearkened to him. Reflection had often its turn, and the love of study and the desire of knowledge have never quite abandoned me." And now he was again at liberty to listen to the solicitation.

Lord Bolingbroke's writings may be divided into two classes—the speculative and the practical. They are of very unequal value. His nature was emotional; but he had neither the mechanic nor the creative faculties of the poet. Phillips regretted that the English Memmius' duties as Secretary at War left him no leisure to cultivate the muse. That eminently bad poet and his brethren might sport with Amaryllis in the shade, or with the tangles of Neæra's hair; but the politician was otherwise engaged.

"St. John, intent,
So Anna's will ordains, to expedite
His military charge, no leisure finds
To string his charming shell."

But posterity will hardly share the poetaster's regret. St. John was no poet; and he had not even the mimetic power which men who are not poets sometimes have. The *Vision of Camilick* is stupid and tedious. There is all the difference in the world between that clumsy caricature and the brilliant sketches of Walpole which occur in his controversial writings. An eminent rhetorician can seldom, indeed, be converted into an effective dramatist: his nature is too intent, too absorbed, too vehement, to enable him to examine the heart, and exhibit the motives, of the "many-headed beast." Nor was Bolingbroke a great moralist or a great philosopher. A thinker, like Isaac Newton, is at his best in his closet. He cannot think clearly or accurately in the senate. The bustle of the streets distracts him. But Bolingbroke was cast in a different mould. Active life *steadied* his mind. His fall, though it was not fatal, did him, in one way, grievous harm. It turned the statesman into a recluse; and Bolingbroke was an honester man at the Foreign Office than in his hermitage. The minister did not practise histrionic tricks; he was eminently frank, simple, and unaffected. But the author had leisure to think of posterity; he put himself into becoming attitudes, and wore the player's buskin. He became—shut out from active life as he was—an historical figure before he died. This accounts for a good deal of

the tawdry finery that is found in his speculative writings, and for the character of these writings themselves. He was not an atheist; "No man," he said, quite sincerely I think, "has higher notions of the Divine omnipotence, or carries them farther than I;" but the political High-churchman had inherited from Dryden a hatred of the priesthood. He was not a sceptic; but the philosophy of Hobbes had been popular at Court when he was a boy. Had his career not been prematurely interrupted, these early influences would have had no permanently evil effect. His mind, otherwise occupied, would have righted itself. But, in his enforced idleness, he took to studying biblical criticism and the utilitarian philosophy; and the result was, that he assailed the outworks of Christianity and the outworks of morals. In these circumstances, it is fairer to judge Bolingbroke by his political than by his philosophical writings.

He had laboured hard to be unambitious, but he had not entirely succeeded. He had once joined in the great game, and the poison was in his veins. He averted his eyes from the Senate; but he could not forget that he was an Englishman. At length he returned to the *mêlée*. He was not permitted to address his peers; but he might address his countrymen. It may be said, quite truly, that posterity is better acquainted with his character as an orator, because his lips were closed.

His speeches have been preserved, because he was not allowed to deliver them. His political writings are, in fact, written orations. The orator reports himself, and instead of the dead words of our parliamentary histories, we have the words as they came from his lips—trembling with passion and stinging with scorn. They have the glow, the animation, the vehemence of consummate oratory. On this field Bolingbroke is himself again. The manly and nervous, if somewhat florid, style of these writings contrasts favourably with the little artifices and the tawdry tricks which cling to the theologian and the moralist. Here there is no flightiness of view; but, on the contrary, a direct and eminent sagacity. All his works manifest an admirable picturesqueness and propriety of expression; but it is only when he is relating the great passages which had occurred in his own experience—only when he is dealing with war, or finance, or parliamentary corruption—only when he is threading the intricacies of continental politics—that he ceases to be capricious and visionary, and becomes the most practical of reasoners—enforcing his views with luminous ease and a masterly intelligence. His papers on the politics of continental Europe are specially able. He had studied the subject thoroughly; and he manifests, in these remarkable dissertations, the capacity of an

administrator and the spirit of a statesman. His invective is powerful and subdued—most powerful when most subdued. But he does not engage many antagonists. John Trot could sarcastically exhort the polemical Hoadley—a prelate who wrote a political treatise or a party squib as his predecessors in old times wielded sword and mace—to study the apostolical constitutions, which enjoined a bishop not to be fond of making his court for gain, and especially to the Gentiles; not to be ready to engage in the business and disputes of the world; not to be ambitious, nor double-minded, nor double-tongued; not to be deceitful in conduct, nor vain and fallacious in discourse. *Quia hæc omnia Deo sunt inimica, dæmonibus grata.* But he reserved the sharpest shafts in his quiver for a nobler victim. He pursued one man with unappeasable animosity. He might write of Athens or of Rome, of Elizabeth or of Charles, but he regarded the past only as it bore upon the present, and history was ransacked to blacken one hated name. The form might be the form of a wicked minister of the Commonwealth, or of a profligate favourite of the Stuarts; but the features were the features of Walpole. His speculative writings, as I have said, are often tawdry, and the style even of his political prelections is somewhat diffuse (as commonly happens to the majority of *speakers who write*); but he becomes bitterly concise,

brilliantly trenchant and direct, whenever that vehement craving for vengeance guides his pen. Walpole was his evil genius. The passionate king of the forest had been trapped by the wary hunter; and, struggle as he might, he could not break the meshes of the net. It was Walpole who drove him into exile. It was Walpole who dragged him before his peers. It was Walpole who would not suffer the most brilliant member of the peerage, and the greatest orator that England had known, to open his lips in the House of Lords. It was Walpole who had prayed that his attainder might never be reversed, and that his crimes might never be forgotten. But though the eagle could not escape, he made his talons felt. It is worth the reader's while, even to-day, to turn to these animated orations. Let him study, in particular, the Dedication of the *Dissertation on Parties*, and the Introduction to *The Idea of a Patriot King*. The Dedication is addressed to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and First Commissioner of the Treasury. The writer did not intend, he said, to follow the ordinary style of these compositions. "I shall compare you neither to Burleigh nor to Godolphin. Let me not profane the tombs of the dead to raise altars to the living." But he dedicated the work to the minister, because he

wished to explain to him the principles which it was written to enforce. The first of these was reverence for the Constitution. Reverence for the Constitution was, in the political, like charity in the religious system, a cloak to cover a multitude of sins. But he had another aim in view, one not less urgent. He designed to re-infuse the spirit of liberty, to reform the morals, and to raise the sentiments of the people. This lesson could never be repeated too often, but when they had at the head of the State " an impudent missionary of vice " it became the bounden duty of every patriot to drive it home. " Such men sin," he broke out, " against posterity as well as against their own age; and when the consequences of their crimes are over, the consequences of their example remain. I think, and every wise and honest man in generations yet unborn will think, if the history of this administration descends to blacken our annals, that the greatest iniquity of the minister, on whom the whole iniquity ought to be charged, since he has been so long in possession of the whole power, is the constant endeavour he has employed to corrupt the morals of men. I say thus generally, the morals; because he who abandons or betrays his country, will abandon or betray his friend; and because he who is prevailed on to act in Parliament without any regard for truth or justice, will easily prevail on himself to

act in the same manner everywhere else. A wiser and honester administration may relieve our trade from that oppression, and the public from that load of debt, under which he has industriously kept it. A wiser administration may draw us back to our former credit and influence abroad, from that state of contempt into which we are sunk among all our neighbours. But will the minds of men, which this minister has narrowed to personal regards alone—will their views which he has confined to the present moment, *as if nations were mortal like the men who compose them, and Britain was to perish with her degenerate children*—will these, I say, be so easily or so soon enlarged?" And then the writer, with a touch of haughty pathos, reverted to his own crippled condition. "I speak as if I could take my share in these glorious efforts. Neither shall I recall my words. Stripped of the rights of a British subject—of all except the meanest of them, that of inheriting—I remember that I am a Briton still. I apply to myself what I have read in Seneca: *Officia ci civis amiserit, hominis exerceat.*" He had been informed, indeed, that the minister intended to prosecute him. But the threat did not disturb him. He might, indeed, fall a victim to power, but truth and reason, and the cause of liberty, would fall with him; and he who was buried in their ruins was happier than

he who survived them. "Weary of the world, determined and prepared to retire wholly from it, he would surely suspend his retreat to face the persecution; and whatever his persecutors might imagine, they would erect a sort of triumphal arch to the man they hated. He would leave the world with more honour than they would remain in it. By suffering in defence of the constitution of his country, they who had thought favourably of him would think that he had crowned the good, and they who had entertained prejudices against him that he atoned for the ill which had been imputed to him. Such different judgments you know, sir, will attend every man's character who acts on our divided stage; and he is happy who can reconcile them so nearly. It never happens that there is a man of whom all speak well; *as it rarely, very rarely, happens that there is a man of whom all speak ill, except those who are hired to speak well.*" Junius must have read these writings attentively. St. John's invective is more florid and copious, that of Junius more concise and measured; but the art with which Junius works a period up to its epigram—the sting in the wasp's tail—and his air of haughty reserve and arrogant humility, were undoubtedly borrowed from Bolingbroke.*

* Compare, for instance, with the extracts from Bolingbroke's writings given in the text, Junius' panegyric on Lord

Walpole had "a long run of luck." It is difficult to describe that eminently successful career by a phrase more suited to the dignity of history. He played his hand carefully, no doubt; but even caution was hardly required, for his cards were all trumps. "What a star has our minister!" his rival could not help exclaiming, as, one by one, the gartered commoner threw the honours which fortune had so bountifully dealt him. What was the secret of this success? "Honest Robin," with his rosy complexion, with

Chatham:—"It seems I am a partisan of the great leader of the Opposition. If the charge hâd been a reproach, it should have been better supported. I did not intend to make a public declaration of the respect I bear Lord Chatham. I well knew what unworthy conclusions would be drawn from it. But I am called upon to deliver my opinion; and surely it is not in the little censure of Mr. Horne to deter me from doing signal justice to a man who, I confess, has grown upon my esteem. As for the common sordid views of avarice, or any purpose of vulgar ambition, I question whether the applause of Junius would be of service to Lord Chatham. *My* vote will hardly recommend him to an increase of his pension, or to a seat in the Cabinet. But if his ambition be on a level with his understanding,—if he judges of what is truly honourable for himself, with the same superior genius which animates and directs him to eloquence in debate, to wisdom in decision,—even the pen of Junius shall contribute to reward him. Recorded honours shall gather round his monument, and thicken over him. It is a solid fabric, and will support the laurels that adorn it. I am not conversant in the language of panegyric. These praises are extorted from me; but they will wear well, for they have been dearly earned." August 15, 1771.

his bull-neck, with his burly figure, who blushed painfully when spoken to, who stammered when he spoke, and who broke down entirely when he first attempted to address the House, was liker the son of a yeoman than the son of a gentleman. His intellectual gifts and acquirements were mediocre. He was probably the most ignorant Prime Minister who ever governed England. He was no scholar: he never opened a volume of history; he knew nothing of continental politics. It was said that, in his hours of leisure or of pleasure, he could "smile without art, and win without a bribe;" but even in private his manners were boisterous and his tastes rude. Nor can it be alleged that his public course was guided by lofty or generous motives; his most eloquent apologist can only venture to suggest that he sometimes served his country, when it was no longer possible to serve himself. But he was sturdy, dogged; he did not know what fear meant; he had an absolute contempt for danger, and an unquenchable thirst for power, which he was resolved to gratify. The Revolution did not merely substitute William for James; it dethroned the King of England. The Tudors and the Stuarts had been real rulers. Even Charles II., though weak and vicious, had been in this sense "every inch a king." He exercised his own will; during the contests upon the Exclusion

Bill he was his own minister; his subjects liked him because he was profuse and forgiving; and they obeyed him because he had been "anointed" to rule over them. But there was nothing to love about the Dutchmen. The veneration that had attended, the divinity that had hedged, the successors of the Confesssor, did not survive the flight of James II. The new men were chief magistrates, who exercised their power through ministers. Bursts of popular passion temporarily drove these ministers out of office, but for sixty or seventy years the heads of the families who had changed the succession governed England. This oligarchy adopted Walpole. He was the nominee of the Revolution families; he became their master. Never was there a more absolute tyrant. With the rank and file acting steadily behind his bench, he dismissed, he disgraced, he ostracised the leaders of the party. Whenever a Whig showed that he was able, or zealous, or ambitious, the minister made a present of him to the Opposition. The Opposition comprised the eloquence, the administrative capacity, the constitutional learning of Parliament; the member for Castle Rising was the Government. He was ultimately driven from office; but the struggle was bitter and protracted. It was during this long Walpolean battle that Bolingbroke's fiery philippics appeared in the columns of the *Crafts-*

man. Pulteney was the parliamentary, Bolingbroke the literary, leader of the Opposition. A new race of controversialists had arisen since Defoe had stood in the pillory, and Swift had been condemned by the Lords :—

> "St. John, as well as Pulteney, knows
> That I had some repute for prose ;
> And, till they drove me out of date,
> Could maul a Minister of State."

Walpole, so long as he could keep his place, took good-naturedly a vast deal of mauling; but at last, in 1742, his imperturbable good nature and his invincible good fortune deserted him. He left that field of battle which none leave as victors. A minister never retires until he is defeated.*

* Sir Robert Peel has written an interesting, and, looking to the cautious and politic temperament of both statesmen, highly characteristic defence of Walpole. Lord Mahon (now Earl Stanhope) had submitted the original estimate which he had formed of Walpole to Sir Robert's revision ; and this defence was the reply. We cannot say that we think it contains any conclusive answer to the charges which have been preferred against George I.'s minister. He asks, for instance, why, if Walpole did really corrupt his age, the Select Committee, appointed after his fall to inquire into his conduct, produced no details of the bribery practised by him ? Several reasons may be assigned. Proof of corruption is always attended with extreme difficulty, especially when it is not a *constituency* but a *representative*, who is bribed. The bribery of a member of Parliament is an occult delinquency, where *penuria testium* is to be expected. Moreover, a committee of Walpole's House of Commons would be apt to regard this

The literary Toryism of the eighteenth century reflected the genius of Bolingbroke; and

delinquency with tenderness,—as lying, in fact, beyond the range of their commission. To prove that the minister had followed an ancient and laudable custom (as they, no doubt, considered it), would not have supplied materials for an impeachment, and might have formed an inconvenient precedent; unless they could discover and denounce distinct acts of fraud, such as, in the notions of the time, touched his honour as a gentleman, they might as well let the investigation drop. Sir Robert Peel, indeed, powerfully enforces the difficulty which at the outset meets Walpole's detractors. "There must surely have been something very extraordinary in the character and powers of that man, who, being the son of a private gentleman, without any advantage from a distinguished name, or services of illustrious ancestors, was Prime Minister of England amid great public difficulties for a period of twenty years—who, mainly by his personal exertions, contributed to establish and confirm, without severity or bloodshed, a new and unpopular dynasty—who tolerated no competitor for power—who rebuked the genius of every adversary." This is well put; but cannot we speak of the Pelhams in almost the same terms? and no historian has ventured to assert that the Pelhams were men of extraordinary powers and character. Walpole's early and steady progress to parliamentary supremacy, in spite of his oratorical failures, is undoubtedly a curious fact—not to be easily explained—best perhaps to be explained when we recollect that at the time few eminent Whig speakers sat in the House of Commons. The field was, consequently, comparatively open; and the man who offered his services to the party possessed moral qualities which, in the circumstances of the Whigs, were even more desirable than high intellectual accomplishments — unwearied patience and a dauntless courage. When he had once become their accepted leader, and acquired the right to direct as he willed the complex machinery which a powerful connection had organised, his way was cleared. Nor can it

Bolingbroke's Toryism was the fruit of his position. The Revolution families kept Walpole in power; Bolingbroke denounced the oligarchy. The oligarchy bribed unscrupulously; Bolingbroke denounced corruption. The oligarchy governed the electoral body; Bolingbroke advocated parliamentary freedom. The oligarchy made the king a cipher; Bolingbroke essayed to unite the people and the king. His modern critics admit the extent and virulence of the disease, but they ridicule the remedies which he proposed. "Bolingbroke," Lord Macaulay observed, "who was the ablest and the most vehement of those who raised the clamour against corruption, had no better remedy to propose than that the royal prerogative should be strengthened." This is scarcely a fair statement of the case. The *Patriot King* is perhaps the least sincere of Bolingbroke's political writings. It

be denied that the age—an age of consolidation, to which repose was essential—needed a man of Walpole's stamp—a man cautious, moderate, politic, merciful, who, so long as he held the seals, was content to leave the smouldering embers of civil strife to die out undisturbed, and in a spirit of indolent good humour "let bygones be bygones." Earl Stanhope's little volume of *Miscellanies* contains a few scraps of great interest, and throws not a little light on two men of very different temper — Sir Robert Peel and Lord Macaulay. It is satisfactory to learn, that the work which Lord Macaulay did not live to complete, and which Mr. Thackeray had designed to undertake, is now in the hands of Lord Stanhope.

was intended as a compliment to Prince Frederick, and it is undoubtedly a very fine and courtly compliment. But a man's everyday manners are not to be learned from the bow which he makes to his prince. We must look elsewhere for the remedies approved and sanctioned by the practical statesman; and, curiously enough, the language used by Bolingbroke in many passages is identical with that used by his critic. Lord Macaulay thought that parliamentary publicity and parliamentary emancipation were needed; and Lord Bolingbroke declared that, until the independency of the Parliament and the uninfluenced and uninfluenceable freedom of elections were effectively secured, there could be no check upon a corrupt and profligate minister. It is, of course, quite true, at the same time, that he desired to diminish the influence of the oligarchy, and to increase the influence of the Crown; and that he proposed to effect this object by uniting the people and the king. The idea was not a very wise idea, perhaps; but it was not an impracticable one, and cannot be ridiculed as such. It was realised many years later, when Pitt, the minister of the Crown and the minister of the middle classes—the representative of royalty and the representative of commerce and finance—defeated the Coalition.

Nor was Bolingbroke's domestic life, in these

later years, without its consolations. He had married, when abroad, a woman who loved him with a pure love, and to whom he was tenderly devoted. A circle of great friends gathered about him. So long as the English language lasts, the names of the men who composed that society will be remembered with pride and with gratitude. Prior, indeed, had been laid in Westminster Abbey. Swift was an exile,—"remote from St. John, Pope, and Gay." The Dean had won for himself wide fame, an immense love, across the Channel; but he always regarded Ireland as his place of banishment, and he continued to look back to England, as Ovid from the shores of the Euxine looked back to Rome. Letters arrived at times from the moody satirist; and occasionally he came himself—*cum Zephyris et hirundine prima.* Bolingbroke could venture to say that his fall had not broken his heart. "I am sometimes gay, but I am never sad." But the Dean was soured. Pope, when he thought of the world, was to give it one more lash at his request. He was daily losing friends, and neither seeking nor getting others. He could not even write to St. John without a twinge of pain. "My lord, I hate and love to write to you; it gives me pleasure and kills me with melancholy." But though Swift and Prior were absent, there was no lack of good company. The friendship

which had been begun at La Source was renewed at Dawley. Voltaire visited the eminent Englishman, in whom he had found all the learning of England and all the politeness of France,—the eminent statesman who, though all his life immersed in pleasure and in business, had found time for learning everything and for retaining everything. Pope at Twickenham, and Lord Berkeley at Cranford, were his near neighbours. Swift had introduced Pope to St. John during the great days of Queen Anne, and the love of the Tory poet for the Tory peer never abated nor grew slack. Sir William Wyndham, his faithful follower and his truest friend, the "dear Willie" of a correspondence which lasted for thirty years; the wise and generous Marchmount; Gay, helpless and innocent, and charming as a child; Murray, as yet better known as a jester than as a jurist; the tender and pure-minded Arbuthnot; the lean, brilliant, and vagrant Peterborough, "who goes to every climate, and never stays in any," were among his intimates. At a later period came the youthful William Pitt, barely out of his teens, but even in his teens haughty, arrogant, and imperious.

Lord Macaulay, who was captivated by Addison, did not love the Dawley and Twickenham society. Bolingbroke was "a brilliant knave;" Pope "a malignant elf." It must be admitted

that few of these men were quite sound "in wind and limb." There were cracks in the mirror. Pope was diseased, Swift went mad, Bolingbroke was insanely ambitious, Peterborough was a knight-errant, and Gay a child. Against Pope, in particular, many evil things may be, and have been, said. The deformed and decrepit poet had a grudge against the world. The feelings of this "Homer in a nutshell" were easily hurt, and easily fired. He was keenly alive to his own infirmities. He resented his malformation. He once or twice tries to allude lightly, and by the by, to "the libelled person and the pictured shape;" but the hand winces and the flesh quivers as he writes. There is a smile on the shrunken face, but the pain is intense. There is mockery in the voice, but the excessive bitterness is fitter for tears than for laughter.

> "Go on, obliging creatures! make me see
> All that disgraced my betters met in me.
> Say for my comfort, languishing in bed,
> 'Just so immortal Maro held his head;'
> And when I die, be sure you let me know
> Great Homer died three thousand years ago."

He affects to put aside the comparison, and to reject the balm; yet it is obvious that he is not sorry to remind his readers that he is not the first great man to whom nature has proved unkind. In the heart of such a man many jealous and angry passions must have lodged. Sometimes he

was bowed down by anguish; sometimes he was fiercely excited. And, undoubtedly, there was a *twist* in his mind as in his body. Pope's was, in many aspects, a lofty and generous nature. He was of an intrepid disposition. He could brave power. Let the cowards bully him if they dared! He loved his friends. Yet he was sometimes base. He was familiar with the stealthy and secret arts with which nature arms the weaker animals. Sometimes he practised these arts without excuse, necessity, or provocation. A purposeless fraud turned the love of Bolingbroke into hatred. It was natural, besides, that such a man should be jealous of his rivals. Not that he wanted generosity. If he hated furiously, he worshipped passionately. He required an idol before which he could bow down and offer up incense—the incense of immortal adulation. For many years Bolingbroke was the idol before which this devotee prostrated himself. The restless, resolute, intriguing, proscribed Jacobite peer was a man in the perfection of manly beauty and vigour; yet in some respects, mental and physical, he bore a curious resemblance to the sickly poet. Such a man attracted and subjugated Pope; but Bolingbroke was one in a thousand, and the poet was more often repelled than attracted by men of letters. The *Dunciad* is the imperishable monument of his animosities. In all the literature of

that age "no whiter page than Addison's remains;" yet even Addison he cruelly maltreated. It may be doubted whether a subsequent generation will recognise the great humane humorist, except as he appears in Pope's cruelly-skilful lines. Already the Spectator's mild features begin to grow indistinct, and the formidable shade of Atticus usurps his place. The copy, of course, bears a likeness to the original; and though the wrinkles and crows'-feet obtain malicious prominence, yet are they drawn with exquisite delicacy, and a touch of surprising lightness and dexterous reserve. Nor need we wonder that Pope and Addison could not continue friends. The temperance of Addison's character would not exercise a soothing influence over Pope's vehement temper. We can fancy that the exquisite urbanity which no provocation could disturb must have often exasperated the "formidable cripple" past endurance.

Whatever their dispositions were, these men undoubtedly spoke to and of each other, and of the world, nobly. It is possible that they were actors, and that ordinary men and women do not use the language they used; but then we do not require the Kembles and Siddonses of the stage to be entirely natural even in private, and a certain high-bred and stately politeness attaches to the gentlemen of the old school. This is a

slovenly generation; but our grandfathers were punctilious about the niceties of dress and manners. Of all these courtly friends, Pope best understood the rhetoric of flattery. His happy adulation has never been matched. The names, so aptly, so artfully introduced into his verse, sparkle like gems in a translucent stream. The poem adorns the name, and the name adds a lustre to the poem. Godolphin, Wyndham, Pulteney, Marchmount, Walpole, Somers, Halifax, Chesterfield, Argyle, Murray, Atterbury, Addison, Gay, Swift, Harley, St. John,—there is hardly a wit, or poet, or statesman of the age who has not a niche in that Pantheon. Among the brilliant group, however, two names are dwelt upon with peculiar and recurring fondness. The first of these was that of a briefless barrister, very witty, very idle, and very needy when Pope first singled him out. At that time the penniless Scotchman was little known in Westminster Hall, and the grave sergeants who stunned the Rolls or lulled the Exchequer "shook their heads at Murray as a wit." He became a great lawyer, he led the House of Commons, he is rightly regarded as the most eminent jurist who ever adorned the English bench; but Lord Mansfield's forensic and judicial triumphs are not his surest titles to immortality. He lives in imperishable poetry, and almost as imperishable prose. He is embalmed in the

eulogy of Pope, and in the invective of Junius. All the resources of our language have been employed to brighten and blacken his fame. The Great Unknown closed a famous epistle by imploring Lord Camden to save his country, and to impeach a wicked judge. "Thus far I have done my duty in endeavouring to bring him to punishment. But mine is an inferior ministerial office in the temple of Justice; I have bound the victim and dragged him to the altar." What a contrast between these fiery epigrams and the dulcet notes which had welcomed the young and sprightly lawyer—those musical strains which remind us of the vanity of life in words rich with the hues and blazoned with the pomp of earth—that subtle homage which borrowed its finest plume from the ignominy of death and the perishableness of mortal honours:—

> "Conspicuous scene! another yet is nigh,
> More silent far, where kings and poets lie;
> Where Murray—long enough his country's pride—
> Shall be no more than Tully or than Hyde!"

The one name was Murray's, the other was St. John's. Murray was his pupil; St. John was his master. Pope never wearied of worshipping his "guide, philosopher, and friend." They had communed together, apart from "low ambition and the pride of kings," of the noblest subjects which can employ and exalt the intellect. St. John

had taught him to fall with dignity, to rise with temper. He had taught him, by his converse, happily to steer from grave to gay, from lively to severe. He had taught him to despise the caprices of fortune, and truly to estimate the baubles of greatness. He had taught him that love, and honour, and virtue, and troops of friends, are independent of the frowns or of the caresses of the court:—

> "Great without title; without fortune, bless'd;
> Rich, even when plundered; honoured, while oppress'd;
> Loved without youth, and followed without power;
> At home, though exiled; free, though in the Tower."

He looked back with pardonable complacency on the hours which they had spent together; and the quaint little grotto at Twickenham, where he had entertained statesmen, and poets, and warriors; where Peterborough had trimmed his vines, and St. John mingled with the friendly bowl the feast of reason and the flow of soul, became a sacred place. "Lo! the Egerian grot." And he looked forward with ardent confidence to the day when the name of Bolingbroke would be a cherished possession among Englishmen, when the sons of those who had assailed the patriot statesman "would blush to think their fathers were thy foes," and when *his* little bark, in the wake of that high admiral, might

> "Pursue the triumph and partake the gale."

Such was "the even of a tempestuous day." But as the shadows lengthened, St. John grew very lonely. "I go into my own country," he said sadly, but the style is still vivid and richly pictorial, "as if I went into a strange country, and shall inhabit my own house as if I lodged in an inn." He was crippled by gout. His wife was dying. Swift had died in the '45; Pope during the spring of the immediately preceding year. Bolingbroke had stood by the death-bed of the great English poet, and had pressed the hand of his dearest friend as he died. "I have known him these thirty years," he said to Spence, as they stood together at the bed-side, "and value myself more for that man's love than——" here the narrator interposes, "St. John sank his head, and lost his voice in tears." "The sob which finishes the epitaph," Mr. Thackeray observes, "is finer than words. It is the cloak thrown over the father's face in the famous Greek picture, which hides the grief and heightens it." So St. John was left alone to drink the bitter dregs of the cup. The solitary was not always serene. Trifles irritated him—as they are apt to irritate men of a sensitive and highly refined organisation. He had always, as Chesterfield says, resented the little inadvertencies of human nature; an over-roasted leg of mutton "would strangely disturb and ruffle his temper;" and

Pope had complained that, though his friend never rebuked him for his follies and vanities, he "would hang his head to see a seam awry." We might wish that one or two incidents in those closing years could be blotted out; but one has not the heart to be angry with the lonely old giant, who had been so long chained to his rock, so sorely afflicted by the gods, so often scared by the thunder and beaten by the waves, but who yet persevered in his haughty defiance, and whose heart had not died within him. The end, however, was at hand. An old cancerous humour in the jaw spread rapidly. A quack undertook to remove it; but the operation gave the sufferer intense pain, and only quickened the progress of the malady. Chesterfield, his warmest friend in these last days, paid him a farewell visit. "God," said the dying man, "who placed me here, will do what He pleases with me hereafter; and He knows best what to do. May He bless you!" He died on the 12th of December 1751.

MARY STUART

BRUTUS.

"Stoop, Romans, stoop,
And let us bathe our hands in Cæsar's blood
Up to the elbows, and besmear our swords:
Then walk we forth, even to the market-place;
And, waving our red weapons o'er our heads,
Let's all cry 'Peace! Freedom! and Liberty!'

CASSIUS.

Stoop then, and wash. How many ages hence,
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
In states unborn, and accents yet unknown?

BRUTUS.

How many times shall Cæsar bleed in sport,
That now on Pompey's basis lies along,
No worthier than the dust?

CASSIUS.

So oft as that shall be,
So often shall the knot of us be called
The men that gave our country liberty."

—*Julius Cæsar*, Act iii. Sc. 1.

MARY STUART.

THE INTRODUCTION.

OF THE WRITING of books about Mary Stuart there is no end. A crowd of brilliant writers have expended upon her fascinating story astonishing industry and infinite ingenuity. Buchanan, Lesley, Goodall, Hume, Robertson, Laing, Whittaker, Chalmers, the Tytlers, Walter Scott, Aytoun, Froude, Burton, Hosack,—it is a literature in itself. It might well seem superfluous to add another stone to the cairn that has been raised to the memory of Mary. But it must be confessed that the industry of her apologists has in general been more obvious than their logic. They have collected an immense mass of most valuable facts, but they have hardly succeeded in bringing them into orderly relation to each other, or in ascertaining, in the scales of a scientific criticism, their comparative weight as bearing upon the question at issue. The bulk, too,

of these apologies is something prodigious,—the curtest defence of the Queen being seldom compressed into less than three or four volumes octavo. And besides all this, it must be admitted that the controversy has been conducted, on the one side as on the other, in a spirit of most unjudicial vehemence.

> " Raised in extremes, and in extremes decried,
> With oaths affirmed, with dying vows denied."

Passionate partisans will not listen to reason, nor to the suggestion that a *via media* may be found. Yet it appears to me to be as great a mistake, on the one hand, to invest Mary Stuart with the attributes of monstrous, unnatural, and detestable criminality, as to reduce her, on the other, to the insipidity of saintship. To the best of my belief Mary was neither a transcendent sinner nor a conspicuous saint,—she was simply a brave, brilliant, high-spirited woman, who had a haughty scorn for meanness and cowardice, a hearty capacity for enjoyment, and who could hate her enemies with all the keenness of a quick, sensitive, and somewhat pagan temper. I have never been able to agree with those who maintain that she loved Darnley to the last, and that she was innocently ignorant as a child of the design of the nobility to remove him,—*that* proposition appearing to me to be as incredible as

the other, which affirms that she blew Darnley into the air because she was ruinously in love with an ill-favoured soldier of fortune like Bothwell. It is unfortunate that Mary's apologists will insist on making her a sort of virgin martyr, and will not be satisfied with what she really was,—a far more curious, complex, subtle, and interesting piece of humanity. The consequence is, that the case against her has been immensely strengthened,—every incident which goes to show that she was cognisant of the action of the nobility against Darnley being tacitly presumed to show, at the same time, that she was madly attached to the man to whom the execution of the plot was ultimately intrusted by his fellow-peers.

The defence which I venture to submit is based upon what I hold to be the only consistent and credible explanation of her conduct. It is the speech of an advocate who for once believes in his client, and who does not resort to special pleading, because he holds that he is entitled to obtain a verdict of "Not guilty" upon the merits.

And this allusion enables me to explain in a sentence why this defence of Mary has assumed the form in which it appears. When Mr Froude's volumes upon the Darnley murder and the Bothwell marriage made their appearance in 1863, I told the author that he had failed to satisfy me that Mary had "aided and abetted" in the sense

in which the Casket Letters represent her as "aiding and abetting." Mr Froude, in reply, proposed, with his natural candour and courtesy, to insert in *Fraser's Magazine* (of which he had become the editor on the lamented death of John Parker), any observations on the subject that I chose to send him. Circumstances prevented me from taking immediate advantage of this liberal offer, and it was not until 1870 that I found leisure to throw into shape the facts and arguments on which I relied. It was difficult, in such circumstances, to speak *in propria persona;* but it occurred to me that any awkwardness might be avoided by putting my reply into the mouth of the counsel who had been retained to defend the memory of the Queen, and who could attack the "learned brother" who had preceded him with the chartered freedom of the bar. With extensive additions and alterations—much of it being entirely rewritten—that reply is now republished.*

The trial was supposed to have reached the closing day, and the report began with the peror-

* In the interval Mr Burton's lively and learned *History of Scotland* had appeared, and the reader will find that a considerable portion of the speech is devoted to an examination of the arguments which he has directed against the Queen. Mr Burton's tone is studiously moderate, and he preserves an air of judicial impartiality which is hardly fair to Mary, seeing that he is really a sturdy and uncompromising partisan.

ation of the speech for the Crown, which was designed to compress into a few brief and pregnant paragraphs the various considerations that had been urged against the Queen. It was in this fashion that the counsel for the prosecution concluded his address to the jury :—

"When the Court rose last night I had concluded my detailed analysis of the evidence which has been adduced by my learned friend and by myself, and it now only remains for me to sum up the general results at which we have arrived. Well, then, gentlemen, we find that Mary Stuart returned to Scotland in 1561, resolved to reverse the Reformation. She had been selected by the great Catholic Confederacy to bring Scotland and England back to the Church, and she had zealously accepted the mission, for she was by education and habit a bitter and intolerant Romanist, who would have drunk greedily the blood of the saints. This purpose fired almost into genius a really supreme intellect—an intellect of the finest and rarest fibre. Yet, like the Catholic society of the age, her nature was composite—she was a devotee and a rake. She had been educated in a sort of moral Hell; the atmosphere of the French Court, with its devilish vices and graces, had been breathed by her from her earliest girlhood; and her temper was vehement and unregulated. For years after her return she was forced to dissemble. The Reformation could not with fair hopes of success be directly assailed—it needed to be undermined. To carry out her object more securely, Mary put herself into the hands of the Reformers, and did not attempt to restrain the violence of their zeal. At length the hour arrived when, having planted herself firmly on her throne, having won the love of her subjects by her really great qualities—her wit, her gaiety, her courage—she could venture to remove the mask. She joined that Catholic alliance from which a brood of furies sprang, and she married her cousin, Lord Darnley, whom she did not love, with the inten-

tion of uniting and consolidating the Catholicism of England and Scotland.

"Elizabeth and Murray had been lulled into a dangerous security by Mary's docility and candour. Their eyes were opened by this unmistakable declaration of war, and they were unwillingly forced to take up arms in defence of their common faith. But Mary's stealthy arts had not been wasted, and Murray soon found to his cost that the Queen had both the power and the will to crush him. She drove him and his friends across the Border, and for a time Protestantism appeared to be in imminent peril.

"But, on the brink of victory, the weak point in Mary's character asserted itself. With her own hand she shattered the edifice she had raised. She took a passionate uncontrollable aversion to her husband, and she fell in love with another man.

"Darnley, perhaps, in spite of his sins, might have been allowed to live on, but for his share in David Rizzio's murder. The Protestant Lords had induced the foolish lad to join the conspiracy against the Catholic secretary, and he was present in the Queen's boudoir when the murder was committed. She swore with hot tears that she would give him a sore heart: and she kept her word.

"Even before the murder of Rizzio, Mary had been on familiar terms with Bothwell. After the murder their intimacy became notorious. They sinned in the most open manner, and the Queen's infatuation about her lusty lover was publicly manifested. Her extraordinary visit to his Castle of Hermitage, in Liddesdale, as well as her frequent interviews with him in the lodgings of his discarded mistress, were known to all the world. It was obvious that she was ready to marry him if her husband could be got rid of: and Bothwell—as she well knew—was not the man to stick at trifles.

"They tried to poison him at Stirling, but the drug would not work; and then, sick and terrified, the wretched Darnley fled to his father's country. But Mary followed him to Glas-

gow and lured him to the Kirk o' Field, which Bothwell had prepared for his reception. The proud spirit of the Queen must have protested against the work in which they were engaged, and her letters show how keenly she felt the degradation of her treachery. 'I am doing what I hate. Would you not laugh to see me lie so well and dissemble so well, and tell truth betwixt my hands? I must go forward with my odious purpose. You make me dissemble so far that I abhor it, and you cause me to do the office of a traitress. If it were not to obey you I had rather die than do it: my heart bleeds at it.—Alas! I never deceived anybody: but I remit me altogether to your pleasure.—Have no evil opinion of me for this, you yourself are the cause of it: for my own private revenge I would not do it to him. Seeing then that to obey you, my dear love, I spare neither honour, conscience, hazard, nor greatness, take it, I pray you, in good part.' There is real anguish in these lines; but she had become the slave of a passion which she could not disobey, and which had utterly subdued her. So she brought the plastic Darnley with her to Edinburgh, where the miserable business was quickly finished. 'Whidder then is he led?'—these are the words of the honest and impartial Buchanan,—'Into the maist desolate part of the town, sumtyme inhabitit while the Papische preistis kingdom lestet, bot for certane yeiris past without ony dwaller, in sic a hous as of itself wold haif fallin downe, gif it had not been botched up for the tyme to serue the turne of this nichtis sacrifice. Now, I beseik you, sen ye cannot with your eyis, yet at the leist with your myndes behold, ane hous whilum of auld preistis, among graves, betwene the ruynes of twa tempillis, itself also ruynous, neir to the theifis hant, and itself ane resetter of theifis, not far from the fort and garrisoun of his enemies, that stude richt over againis the dure, be whilk gif ony man suld fle out, he culd not eschaip their traterous ambuschment. The veuary schape of this place, when ye considder in your mynd, when ye heir of the ruines of kirkis, graves of deid men, lurking corneris of theifis, bordelhousis of harlotis—dois not, I say, not the hous only, but

also everie part neir about it, serue to proclaim mischeif and trecherie?'

"This was the house which, on the morning of February 10, 1567, was, with the unlucky Darnley, blown into the darkness. It is only fair to say that the Queen was in general true to her friends, and now she did her utmost to screen her accomplice. But her efforts were unavailing; the dramatic accompaniments of the murder arrested the attention of Europe, and the general instinct divined that Mary and her paramour were the murderers. Though Darnley had been removed, and Lady Bothwell divorced on a shameful plea, to enable them to wed, yet the feelings of horror and indignation which their crime had evoked, forced them to pause. As a *voluntary* marriage would have been ruinous to the Queen, it was arranged between them that Bothwell should appear to carry her off by force. She went to Stirling, and the 'ravishment' was effected on her return. A month afterwards they were married at Holyrood, and the widow of Henry Darnley became the wife of his assassin. But their happiness was short-lived; the outraged national sentiment rose in revolt against these monstrous nuptials, and the Queen was separated from her lover, and secluded in the Castle of Lochleven. These are the undoubted circumstances of the case; and I maintain, gentlemen, that the sequence of circumstance alone is sufficient to convict the Queen.

"Gentlemen, I am done. The immense mass of evidence which has been laid before you must have produced on your minds a somewhat bewildering impression. But I venture to say that, amid the chaotic confusion, one story is told with fatal precision, one figure stands out in disastrous simplicity. The duty which you have to discharge is as simple and as precise."

THE SPEECH FOR THE QUEEN.

THE ADVOCATE for the Queen then rose to address the jury on her behalf. He said :—

May it please your Lordship—gentlemen of the Jury,—The earliest portrait of Mary, drawn by her enemies, which has been handed down to us, is that contained in the *Detectio Mariæ Reginæ* of George Buchanan. It is a picture drawn in black throughout. The light which falls upon the guilty Queen is lurid and ghastly. This northern Messalina, who revels in abominable wickedness, is eager to murder, not her husband only, but her year-old boy, to smooth Bothwell's path to the throne. It would have been easy to dispose of this vile and grotesque monster in Mary's own words—"The natural love which the mother bears to her only bairn is sufficient to confound them, and needs no other answer." But my learned friend, while offering a nominal allegiance to Buchanan, occupies a more tenable position. His, I am bound to admit, is a fine and subtle study, characterised

by a really imaginative insight into the motives and passions which move the tragic Muse, and I know that it must have produced a very vivid impression on your minds. How am I to remove this impression? I can appeal to your impartial judgment alone. I am a plain speaker, unused to the arts of the rhetorician; but the story which I have to tell needs no embellishment, — cannot, on the contray, be told too simply or too plainly.

Now, gentlemen, there is one matter regarding which at the outset it is important that there should be no misunderstanding between us. It is said that we who decline to believe that the Queen was guilty are "sentimentalists,"—that is the expression, I think, which my learned friends employ. They mean, I presume, that the sentiment by which we are influenced is a sentiment of unreasonable admiration or unreasonable pity. It is of course unnecessary for me to point out that it is also possible to indulge in a sentiment of unreasonable hostility, and that the nickname may with even more propriety be applied to the partisan whose reason is clouded and whose judgment is warped by an intemperate passion of dislike. Gentlemen, what I propose to do, what I ask you to do, is to lay sentiment entirely aside, and to look at the indictment simply in the light of the evidence

that has been adduced. Is Mary Stuart guilty, —Yea or Nay?

Well, gentlemen, the issue which my friend has framed, and which he now submits to you, is in these terms: "Whether the said Mary Stuart "was privy, art or part, to the murder of her "husband, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley? and "whether the said Mary Stuart was privy to "the said murder in order that she might mar-"ry the Earl Bothwell?" You see what my learned friend's case requires. Before you can return an affirmative answer you must be persuaded that Mary murdered Darnley to enable her to gratify a "filthy and inordinate love" for Bothwell. It is the combination of these two elements that gives its more than dramatic wickedness to the crime; unless the murder and the love had interlaced, the tragedy at Kirk o' Field would have been quickly forgotten. This is not a technical plea arising out of the form of the issue which my friend has framed. If Darnley, with the consent of the woman whom with unmanly meanness he had wronged and slandered, was simply removed out of the world as a noxious, unclean animal, hateful to God and man, the verdict, even from the impartial assize of history, must be substantially a verdict of acquittal.

It is clearly, gentlemen, of the first importance, in enabling us to understand what follows, that we should obtain a distinct conception of the character of the girl—for she was little more than a girl—who in 1561 entered the Royal Palace of Holyrood as Queen of Scotland. She was only eight days old when she became the nominal, only eighteen years old when she became the actual, ruler of Scotland. My friend says that all her girlhood was spent at the wicked French Court,—the truth being that by far the greater part of her life, up to the day when she sailed for Leith, had been passed in the seclusion of a nunnery. Her brief married life abroad was blameless,—Mr George Buchanan even can find no flaw in her behaviour to Francis, except that she poisoned him. But she had been bred a Roman Catholic by her uncles—the great Catholic soldier, and the great Catholic priest—and she returned to Scotland with a purpose fixed as the stars to undo the Reformation. So my learned friend says; and her conduct during the four years that followed is attributed by him to consummate deceit and prolonged dissimulation.

I am ready to join issue with him here. It is quite true that during these years Mary's policy was studiously moderate, and even to a certain extent anti-Catholic. The power was in the

hands of the Protestant nobility and clergy; but, as far as possible, she exerted her influence against its harsh and arbitrary exercise. In so far as it was a moderate policy it reflected her own inclinations; in so far as it was anti-Catholic it was forced upon her. Mary was not a fanatic. There is no proof whatever that she was devoted to Rome. She had at most, in those earlier years, a conservative attachment to the Church in which she was bred. But it went no deeper,—quick observers like Randolph could see that her ecclesiastical sympathies were not keen. Her nature, indeed, was of that large and magnanimous sort which does not relish restraint. She was at home in the saddle, and she talked as fearlessly as she rode. It has been said that Elizabeth was half a Catholic at heart; Mary, on the contrary, was half a Protestant. She was far ahead, however, of the ordinary Protestant of her own age. Some dim conception of what we mean when we speak of freedom of conscience had been formed by her. My friend is merely libelling her when he says that she would have enjoyed a Bartholomew,—there is no proof whatever that her heart was cruel, or that she loved blood. She wanted toleration for herself and for her friends—nothing more. It is easy to assert that her zeal for religious liberty may be traced to the fact that she was in the minority. It may

have been so: such an assertion, rising, as it does, into the region of *motive*, does not admit of an absolute negative. But I venture to entertain a very confident belief that Mary, from her unfanatical point of view, saw no particular reason why Christian men, as a Christian duty, should constantly burn and hang and torture each other. That she was in the minority may possibly have quickened this conviction into activity; but it was primarily due to what her contemporaries would have called a sceptical habit of mind. Whatever its source, she held to it at least with singular consistency and tenacity; she was never satisfied with less, and she never asked for more. Before she left France she told Throgmorton that the religion which she professed she took to be upon the whole the most acceptable to God, but that she meant to constrain none of her subjects, and hoped that none of them would be supported to constrain her. Throgmorton saw her afterwards in Edinburgh. "The Queen," he wrote, "quietly tolerates the Reformed Religion, who is thought to be no more devout towards Rome than for the contentation of her uncle." When a fanatical assembly assured her that the practice of idolatry could not be tolerated in the sovereign any more than in the subject, she told them plainly that while no consideration would induce her to forsake the religion in which she

had been brought up, yet she did not desire to force the conscience of any person, but would permit every one "to serve God in such manner as they are persuaded to be the best;" and the Act passed in 1567, when she was all-powerful in Parliament and in the country, was an Act to secure liberty of religion, and liberty only.

It is quite possible that she designed ultimately to obtain the repeal of the laws which proscribed the exercise of her religion, and to recover for the Catholic clergy some portion of the ecclesiastical revenues which a rapacious nobility had appropriated. But it did not enter into her head to ally herself with the intemperate zealots who were eager to drag every heretic to the stake. No word of hers can be quoted which will bear such construction. She was a dutiful daughter of the Church, in the courtly ecclesiastical language, and that was all. My friend says that she signed the Catholic League. The evidence (as I shall show) is quite the other way. She held herself resolutely aloof from the great conspiracy against the Reformation which was being hatched by the kings and bishops of Catholic Europe.

Later in life Mary's religious convictions grew in force and intensity. She became a saint of the Church, a martyr for the faith. She had been bitterly persecuted, and persecution bore its usual fruit. Suffering fanned her devotion to her

Church into a fiercer glow. The even balance of her mind was upset. The cruelly hunted victim turned upon the hunters. People against whom the shafts of intolerance have been constantly directed cease to believe in toleration It is only a mind of the very finest temper that can resist the temptation to retaliate. And at a time, moreover, when all the world had deserted her, the Catholic Church had remained true. She was driven into an ardour of piety alike by gratitude and by resentment.

One fixed purpose Mary undoubtedly harboured. She was resolved that sooner or later she would be Queen of England. She was in any view the next heir to, and, in the view of many, the legitimate occupant of the throne which Elizabeth—a bastard—had usurped. To this conviction she clung throughout her life with invincible tenacity. Neither menace nor persuasion could induce her to ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh, by which her title to the English succession had been thoughtlessly signed away.*

* "The Scottish Queen," Mr Burton says, "by declining to accept of the Treaty of Edinburgh, adhered to her claim on the English throne ;" but the words in the treaty to which Mary reasonably and prudently objected (words capable of being construed into an absolute renunciation of her right), were that she and her husband should "in all times coming" abstain from bearing the English title. —*Burton's History of Scotland*, iv. 289.

But she could bide her time, and she was willing to wait with patience.

Willing to wait, and to take life in the meantime, in that austere country which she had been born to rule, on the easiest available terms. She was, we know, endowed with all the gifts and graces which captivate the hearts of men. The most beautiful woman of the age must have found in her beauty alone a force of attraction and command. Then her conversation was lively—her intellect was keen and politic—her manners were winning—she loved letters and poetry, and the arts which soften and adorn life. Yet though her vivacity was extreme, and the "wantonness" of her deportment was rebuked by the Reformers, Mary's character was not gay. She had not that deeply-rooted equanimity which keeps people inwardly cheerful: she needed the excitement of action to prevent her from growing sad. For there was, after all, if not a deep vein of sadness, at least a poetic pensiveness—the pensiveness of a doomed race—in her nature; and when she was not brilliantly discursive she suffered from *ennui*, lassitude, and despondency.

My learned friend has likened her to some wild animal of the forest—a pantheress, or tiger-cat—the soft lustrous fur hiding the sharp claws and the taste for blood. Her fierceness and her vindictiveness, her stealthiness and her patience,

were feline. Had he said that she was audaciously frank, and that she forgot and forgave far too readily, he would have come nearer to the mark. Mary was wonderfully successful as a ruler,—until the murder of Darnley she crushed every outbreak in the bud,—but she did not win victory by deceit. She blazed out vehemently; not in politic diplomacy, but in these sudden electrical bursts of passion, lay her power. Her magnificent force of indignant and angry energy shattered her enemies like a hurricane when it breaks. But the storm quickly spent itself, and then her scattered foes recovered themselves, one by one, and she was only too ready to forget the past, and to be pleasant and friendly again. She needed to be roused out of the dreamy imaginative indolent mood that was natural to her; but when once roused, woe to the man or woman in her way! Once rouse her, and then this girl who, by nature, was inclined to trifle, to float with the stream, to put as far as possible from her what was grim and ugly and tragic in life, was transformed into such a beautiful destroying angel —haughty, defiant, inflexible—as poetry has created.

Such was Mary. Sedate and tranquil as a rule, yet daring in the presence of danger, and finding a bracing charm in manly exercise and the mountain air,—ready at any moment to quit the lux-

uries of her palace for a swift gallop under the stars,—a true daughter of Scotland and the North !

Those writers, gentlemen, who have represented the Queen as the mere slave of a specifically sensual nature, seem to me to misunderstand her utterly. Her enemies admit that she was true and constant in friendship. Friendship is a masculine virtue, and Mary's character was masculine in this respect, that friendship was more necessary to her than love. I shall have more to say on this matter directly: in the meantime I shall only add that, to assume that the gratification of passion, lawful or unlawful, was, even in the most subordinate sense, the business of Mary Stuart's life, is a complete delusion. She had a clear politic sense of the necessities of her station. She was a person round whom world-wide interests converged, and to her a mere love-match was clearly out of the question. So, during the not unhappy years that preceded the Darnley marriage, she sought in art and letters that relaxation from the cares of state which she could not enjoy in domestic life ; and, when the work of the day was finished, amid a few choice associates, she gathered the wits and poets and scholars—the Maitlands, the Chatelars, and the Buchanans—of the Court around her.

It is impossible to deny that the position of

this girl-queen was supremely difficult. She was a Queen, a Catholic, and the next in succession to the English throne. Here were three enormous disabilities. A chronic war had been maintained for centuries between the turbulent nobility of Scotland and their sovereign. The great vassals had rendered only a nominal allegiance to the Crown. They had latterly taken the bit between their teeth, and had no mind to lose the ascendancy which they had acquired—especially when the reins were in a woman's hands. It must be admitted, moreover, that the Scotch nobles of that age were about the basest, the most unscrupulous, the most corrupt aristocracy of which history contains any record. Treachery was their native air. The Protestant peer was even more disreputable than the Catholic. Some of the Catholic peers still retained a certain old-fashioned, old-world sense of honour; but to the Protestant peer, who had embraced the Reformed doctrines for his own aggrandisement, and who adhered to them because he had great material interests bound up with Protestantism, the word was not in the dictionary. My friend has pronounced an eloquent eulogy upon the Earl of Murray. Murray's is a character which I do not care to scan too closely. When I am told, indeed, that the blameless Earl had no taint of self, I cannot help recalling certain incidents

of his career. Murray, with no taint of self, was a pensioner both of England and of France; Murray, with no taint of self, warily kept out of the way of danger till the fruit of intrigue was ripe; Murray, with no taint of self, left a princely inheritance to his daughter; Murray, with no taint of self, and animated by chivalrous regard for his sister, was the mainspring of every treasonable conspiracy against her. Yet in Murray there may be detected, undoubtedly, those elements of greatness which, in spite of craft, cupidity, and selfishness, win, and deservedly win, the admiration of mankind. He was a man eminently capable of governing, and only a slight slip of a girl stood between him and his true work in the world! "They may sit," as has been said by Sir Thomas Browne, in a very noble passage—"they may sit in the orchestra and noblest seats of heaven, who have held up shaking hands in the fire, and humanly contended for glory." I will not, therefore, enter into the controversy which Murray's career provokes. I am willing, when speaking of the Protestant nobility, to assume that his name does not figure on the list,—nay, to admit, that in some respects, the memorable words which a generous enemy applied to Brutus, might not improperly be addressed to the great Regent,—

> "This was the noblest Roman of them all.
> All the conspirators save only he

> Did that they did in envy of great Cæsar ;
> He only in a general honest thought
> And common good to all, made one of them.
> His life was gentle, and the elements
> So mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, 'This was a man !'"

The early Protestantism of Scotland, besides, was a political as well as a religious force. It was an outbreak of the democratic spirit against the fat, sleek, avaricious, bloated churchman—the most obvious aristocrat of the day. Its ranks were mainly filled by the citizens of the burghs, and by the smaller gentry, both of whom were democratic in their ideas; and the instinctive antipathy to monarchy was necessarily intensified when the monarch was a Catholic.

The Scotch Queen, moreover, gentlemen, was the next heir to the English crown, and was as such a constant menace to Elizabeth. It thus became the policy of Elizabeth, and of the eminent statesmen who surrounded her, to blacken the character and to sap the authority of her rival. During the whole of Mary's short reign, the agents accredited to her Court by England were engaged in teaching disloyalty to her subjects. The English faction had long been unpopular in Scotland; England was the ancient enemy, France the ancient ally; but the Reformation reversed the familiar traditions, and the Scotch Reformers

were an English as well as a democratic and Calvinistic party. It is true that Elizabeth did not like them, neither their Calvinism nor their democracy, and more than once it needed all the craft of Cecil to prevent an open rupture. She instinctively recoiled from a party which paid scant reverence to throne or altar, and the shame of an alliance with the "rascal multitude" must have been keenly resented by the haughty Tudor. But she could not dispense with their support; had she ceased to retain them in her service, Mary would have grown dangerously strong; so she continued to bribe them and to bully them, to wheedle them and to scold them, in her characteristic fashion.

To these three forces, the ambition and the greed of the Confederate nobles, the fierce intolerance of Calvinism, the jealous susceptibilities of Elizabeth and the steady animosity of her great minister, all the troubles of Mary's life were due. The English Calvinistic democratic party rebelled against Mary's mother, when the Reforming ideas first acquired strength, rebelled against Mary herself when she married Darnley, again rebelled when Rizzio was murdered, again rebelled after the Bothwell marriage. Had she been left unmolested, she might have left the records of a happy and fortunate reign; but she was pur-

sued by an implacable animosity, partly political and partly theological, that never wearied till she was hunted down.

It is obvious, gentlemen, that the Queen had little to hope for from any sense of justice or any sentiment of compassion that animated the party to which Knox and Morton and Buchanan belonged. To them this brilliant and bewitching girl was the incarnation of the very Spirit of Evil. Their writers and preachers wrote and preached about her exactly as they wrote and preached about Jezebel or the Witch of Endor. The heavy and lumbering caricature of Buchanan, for instance, is unworthy of a man of any literary or creative skill.* We must be cautious, therefore, in accepting what these bitter fanatics said about one whom they were utterly incapable of judging.

Until her marriage with Darnley, Mary's reign

* The most striking passage in the *Detectio* is the description of the Kirk o' Field, and it contains one really great piece of invective, viewed simply as such. But the motives assigned are grossly, vilely, and childishly ridiculous. "Why was this place chiefly chosin? Thay pretend the helsumnes of air. O gude God! going about to murder hir husband, seikes scho for ane helsum air? To what use? Not to preserve his lyfe, bot to reserve his body to torment. Heirto tend hir wyfelie diligent attendance, and hir last cair of hir husbandis lyfe. Schoe feiris lest he suld be preventing deith, be delyverit from pane, *schoe wald fane have him feill himself die.*" Mr Burton candidly admits that in the *Detectio* "a quantity of incredible charges are heaped up," and that the general treatment of the story by Buchanan is utterly unreliable (iv. 447).

was comparatively peaceful, and there can be no doubt that she succeeded in inspiring her subjects with a strong sentiment of attachment to her person. Elizabeth watched her progress with jealous eyes. Most of the Scotch Protestant nobles were in the pay of England, and the English diplomatic agents maintained throughout the entire reign of Mary confidential relations with what would now be called her Majesty's Opposition. It is clear that Mary resented this habitual and hostile espionage. But she was willing to keep on friendly terms with England. Elizabeth was a dangerously near and formidable neighbour, and Elizabeth might exclude her from the succession. Nay, she professed herself ready to make such a marriage as would be agreeable to her cousin, and there is no reason to doubt her good faith. If she had waited, however, till Elizabeth found her a fit husband, she would have waited till doomsday. Elizabeth trifled about Mary's marriage much in the same way that she trifled about her own; and when at last Mary insisted on entering into such a marriage as Elizabeth had indicated—a marriage with a native nobleman—she seized the opportunity with treacherous alacrity. She induced Murray and the Protestant nobility to rebel, and she did her best to foster civil war throughout Scotland. Her rival had grown too great.

The marriage with Darnley—strengthening and consolidating Mary's claims to the English succession—was a highly politic marriage. Elizabeth, of course, did not like it; and Murray, who chose to regard it as a religious as well as a political alliance, rode off to the country, and called his party to arms. But the rising was quickly suppressed. The Confederate Lords found to their dismay that the people of Scotland had rallied round their Queen. She herself in steel jacket at the head of her troopers swept them away out of Edinburgh, over the Pentlands, to Dumfries, and at last—such of them as remained together—clean across the English border. Elizabeth hastened to make friends with Mary, and to intercede for the banished Lords. But Mary, angry and triumphant, declined, in language which was expressly designed to humiliate her cousin, "to allow either France or England to interfere between her and her revolted subjects."

The Darnley marriage, as I have said, was dictated by policy as much as by affection. I see no reason to doubt, however, that at first Mary really loved in a way the tall handsome lad. But it was impossible that he could retain her regard. The King was a base, unmannerly, vicious, dissolute boy; and if any faith is to be placed in the *chronique scandaleuse* of the day, his amours were of the vilest and most loathsome de-

scription. Before long it became known at Court that the King and Queen were far from friendly. Mary treated the young fool, who was making himself hateful to all parties, with unconscious contempt; and in his weak, crazy, diseased brain—for he was half-mad—all sorts of angry and jealous delusions harboured. The poor irritable creature was in the mood for murder when Ruthven and Morton suggested to him that it would be prudent to put the Italian secretary out of the way.

David Rizzio conducted the foreign correspondence of the Scotch Government, and a skilful man in that capacity must of course have been highly useful to a Queen who had many foreign correspondents. But, except that he was an Italian, there is really no evidence of any kind against him. The scandal which associated his name with the Queen's has been explicitly disowned by my learned friends.* The Protestant Lords, however, felt instinctively that the accomplished secretary was in some way or other an impediment. He did not belong to their persuasion, and he was known to have influence with Mary. Yet his murder, after all, was a mere cloak to the real object of the conspiracy. The Lords of the Congregation had been scattered by Mary's swift and decisive energy, and their most distin-

* Froude, viii. 250; Burton, iv. 300.

guished leaders were now in England under the protection of Elizabeth. Some of them, however, were still at Holyrood—Morton, Ruthven, Lindsay, and others. The Parliament of 1566 was about to meet, and it was presumed that the Parliament would attaint the banished Lords, and confirm the forfeiture of their estates. Mary, during the recent troubles, had shown that she was a woman of eminent capacity and courage, and quite able to rule her unruly subjects by her own mother-wit. *She* at least could not be made the tool of their cupidity or their fanaticism; on the contrary, were she permitted to retain power, their cupidity and their fanaticism would be steadily checked, if not sternly repressed. The dissensions between the Queen and her husband had by this time become public, and the foolish boy was induced to join the conspiracy,—the Lords undertaking to remove his rival, and make him king; he, on the other hand, consenting to recall Murray, and dissolve the Parliament. Such were the ill-assorted allies who joined hands over the mangled body of Rizzio.

The tragedy took place late at night in the Palace of Holyrood, in the presence of Mary Stuart, who was within three months of her confinement. Rizzio fell at the feet of his mistress, and clung to her dress. Darnley held her back, while the unfortunate secretary was dragged to

the door, and stabbed again and again. The outraged indignant Queen, with angry tears in her eyes, turned fiercely upon her craven husband. "It shall be dear blood for some of you if his be spilt," she said, before she knew that he was dead. When the news was communicated to her by one of her ladies, she dried her eyes: "No more tears —I will think upon a revenge."

There is no conclusive evidence that these speeches were uttered by the Queen.* But there can be no doubt that they represent with tolerably accuracy the bitter emotions which the bloody fate of her favourite minister, as well as the indignity offered to herself, were calculated to excite. From that night, it may be admitted, the breach between the Queen and King was not to be repaired. Separation of some kind became obviously only a question of time.

The conspirators were not permitted to reap the harvest on which they had reckoned. Murray, Rothes, Ochiltree, Kirkaldy of Grange, indeed, rode into Edinburgh next day to find the Queen a virtual prisoner in Holyrood. But during the night that followed, Mary convinced her foolish husband that he had chosen dangerous allies, as

* Mr Burton does not appear to accept them. "For this account, accepted in several quarters, I am aware of no better authority than Spottiswoode's mere statement, and the dubious memoirs attributed to Lord Herries" (iv. 313).

indeed was true enough, and persuaded him to fly with her to Dunbar. Bothwell and Huntley had escaped from the palace immediately after the murder, and were already in the field. Again the chivalry of Scotland rallied round its Queen, and, in the course of a week, Mary found herself at the head of an army which the Confederates did not dare to face. To escape her rapid hawk-like swoop they retired from Edinburgh and dispersed in all directions, the majority seeking the hospitality of Elizabeth, to whose ministers the nature and details of the plot had been confidentially communicated several weeks before its execution.

The conspiracy was foiled. But it read, gentlemen, a highly instructive lesson both to Mary and to her enemies. It taught the discontented Lords that their sovereign had succeeded in winning the confidence of the better part of her subjects, and that intrigue and rebellion would continue to be unremunerative unless they could first contrive to bring her into disrepute. It taught the Queen that there could never be any real amity between herself and the fanatical faction which regarded her as an idolatress; and that the sentiment of personal loyalty which was felt by men like Huntley and Bothwell, and Seton and Herries, was the mainstay of her throne.

Now, gentlemen, I must ask you to examine with the utmost attention the events that imme-

diately followed the suppression of the Rizzio conspiracy in March 1566.

Darnley, as we have seen, had meanly and basely abandoned his associates in that affair. His baseness did not stop there. He appeared before the Council and declared solemnly that he was entirely innocent of the late murderous plot; and a proclamation to the same effect was made at the market-cross of Edinburgh. From the day on which that declaration was made Darnley was a doomed man. Men like Morton and Ruthven and Lindsay were not ready to forgive; and from his first coming it had been foreseen that, among a proud and jealous nobility, this foolish and presumptuous boy was likely to fare badly. But now he had proved himself to be a traitor as well as a fool, and honour, especially among thieves, is an indispensable virtue. He had not a friend left in the world. The Queen was his wife, no doubt, but he had bitterly wronged her. In fact, if we believe only one-half of the scandalous rumours of the time, it is clear that Darnley deserved to be forcibly put away—with more or less of indignant loathing—like a noxious unclean reptile. The position of this unhappy lad during the last year of his life almost provokes our pity by its tragical isolation.

We cannot now probe, gentlemen, the feelings which Mary experienced when the character of

her wretched husband was first plainly manifested to her. She had quickly learned that she had made a frightful blunder, and the murder of Rizzio must have turned natural vexation into burning and uncontrollable resentment. It is quite possible that for some days thereafter she thirsted for revenge. But Mary was not a good hater; she was always engaged in pardoning (from her brother downwards) her rebellious subjects. This facility of disposition was associated with, or rather was due to, that indolence of temperament to which I have adverted. Rizzio was murdered in March; and before her confinement, which took place in June, her heart had obviously softened. In the inventories of her effects drawn up before the birth of her boy, there are numerous bequests to Darnley, among the rest a diamond ring, enamelled in red, and against which is written, "It was with this that I was married; I leave it to the King who gave it me." It is to be noted, moreover, that neither in these inventories nor in her "State," as it is called, does Bothwell's name appear among the beneficiaries. From these and other circumstances it may be fairly concluded that Mary's study of revenge was not consistently pursued, and that she sometimes relented.

It is at this time that Earl Bothwell first rises into note. He alone, among all the Protestant

nobility, had never been a pensioner of Elizabeth. The old national animosity against England was embodied and personified in James Hepburn. "He is as mortal an enemy to our nation," said the sagacious Randolph, "as any man alive." On the other hand, he had been the devoted servant both of Mary and of her mother,—among the faithless, faithful only found. He had ever been loyal to the monarchy. His fidelity was incorruptible. When the policy to which, through good and evil report, he had steadily adhered became a success, it was inevitable that he should attain a great political position. Mary was bound to advance the most trusty and serviceable of her subjects. He became virtually the first minister of the Queen. But there was no whisper, gentlemen, until after the murder of Darnley, that he was more than a faithful and trusted adviser of the Crown; and the busy slanderers of the Court, so far as we can gather from the documents that remain, never coupled his name with Mary's.

Buchanan, indeed, has ventured to assert that the criminal relations between them were at this time notorious, and that they sinned openly and recklessly. "They seemed to fear nothing more than that their wickedness should be unknown." Had this been true, some contemporary allusion would surely have been preserved. My learned

friend has failed to recover a single line or word tending to show that such an impression prevailed. Buchanan himself attended the baptism of the infant prince, which took place at Stirling in December 1566; and he wrote an ode in honour of the event, in which Mary's graces and virtues are celebrated in undeniable Latin. This was at the very close of the year which, according to his narrative, had been passed in the open gratification of lawless passion. "I never," wrote De Croc, the French ambassador, about the same time, "saw her Majesty so much beloved, honoured, and esteemed, nor so great a harmony among all her subjects, as at present is by her wise conduct; for I cannot perceive the smallest difference or division."

Two incidents, and two incidents only, occurred during that year, which by perverse ingenuity have been made to assume a malignant aspect. The Queen, in the first place, interested herself in Bothwell's marriage with the Lady Jean Gordon, a sister of Lord Huntley. You and I, gentlemen, would be inclined to fancy that, if her heart then belonged to Bothwell, she would not have been anxious to make a present of him to another woman. My learned friend takes a different view. "Experience in poor human nature," he says, "teaches us that people, terrified by the presence of temptation, do sometimes set up bar-

riers against it which they afterwards make frantic efforts to get over." * It is for you, gentlemen, to say which explanation is most consistent with your knowledge of the human heart. Anxious to erect a barrier between herself and Bothwell! As if no barrier had already existed! As if she, a married woman about to become a mother, could not otherwise secure immunity from the temptation of becoming—What?—his wife or his mistress! The other incident to which I allude was the ride from Jedburgh to the Hermitage. A special assize was being held by Mary at Jedburgh. Bothwell, who had been wounded while engaged in securing a culprit, was unable to attend the Court, at which, in virtue of his office as Warden of the Marches, he ought to have assisted. The Court sat for several days, and when the business was finished, Mary, attended by her brother, rode over to the Castle of Hermitage, eighteen miles distant, and stayed for some hours with the wounded Warden. There could be no hot and unseemly haste about a visit which was not paid until the business on hand had been entirely concluded. A day's ride was a not uncommon event in an age when riding was the habitual mode of travelling, and Mary, we know, was at home in the saddle. The prisoners who

* Burton, iv. 298.

had been tried at the assize had been secured by the Warden, and the wound from Elliot had been received when engaged in this service. Mary would have shown scant courtesy, to say the least, had she failed to inquire after the viceroy's health before returning home. A stiff official inquiry would have suited some people; but Mary secured the love of her subjects, not by stiffness, but by an easy cordiality which was the natural expression of her warm and impulsive disposition. She understood the art of paying those gracious attentions which, coming from royalty, are so potent; and we can believe, besides, that she enjoyed heartily her rapid ride through wild Liddesdale in that mellow autumnal month which in Scotland is often the pleasantest of the whole year.

My friend, when facts fail him, takes refuge in fanciful—*very* fanciful—speculations. It is not utterly incredible, he says, that Mary should have grown infatuated about Bothwell. That she should have conceived a violent and unruly passion for a man old enough to be her father is not perhaps incredible, gentlemen, but it is surely monstrously unlikely. "Not so absolutely startling," continues my learned friend, "when all the facts are considered. Mary was evidently one of those women to whom at that time a great affair of the heart was a necessity of life,—a

necessity increased in intensity by her utter disappointment in her last attachment, and the loathing she entertained towards its object." *

I am not aware on what grounds my friend assumes that Mary was one of those women to whom a great affair of the heart was a necessity. We only know that she had been twice married, and that the latter at least was a marriage in which her heart was engaged. It seems to me, so far as we can judge from the evidence that exists, that Mary was precisely the sort of woman to whom an exclusive and absorbing passion was *not* a necessity. But, even supposing that my friend is right, surely the last man likely to evoke such a passion was the man whom she had known all her life, whose marriage she had promoted, who, if we are to believe contemporary writers, was singularly ill-favoured, and who had neither scholarly accomplishment nor natural superiority of character to recommend him to a woman of brilliant capacity and polished tastes. Love at first sight is, in its unreasoning violence, a recognised phenomenon; but the love which is slowly matured burns with a calmer and steadier flame. The frantic passion which Mary is alleged to have conceived for Bothwell is, considering its object, and the intimacy which for so

* Burton, iv. 324.

many years had subsisted between them, wholly unnatural and unintelligible.

How then, by whom, and from what motives, was the murder of Darnley brought about? A good deal of information upon the subject has from first to last been obtained. Let us see clearly what it amounts to.

It may be said, generally, that the whole nobility of Scotland were in league against him. Murray, Morton, Lethington, Argyle, Huntley, Bothwell—all the leaders of the various political parties—had come to be of opinion that it would be of advantage to the public service that he should be put out of the way. He had with singular infelicity contrived to make himself obnoxious to each of them. He had been rude to one, arrogant to another, base and fickle and treacherous to all. The report of the Craigmillar Conference proves that early in winter the plot had assumed definite shape, and that it was adopted by Murray and Lethington as well as by Bothwell, Huntley, and Argyle. The "band" drawn up by Sir James Balfour, and signed by Bothwell, Maitland, Argyle, Huntley, and others, was to the effect that "it was most profitable for the commonwealth that such a young fool and proud tyrant" should be "put off" one way or other. The execution of the deed appears to have been ultimately intrusted to Bothwell; but it

must ever be kept distinctly in view that, in the plot against Darnley, every prominent peer and politician was engaged.

Was Mary aware that such a plot existed? The evidence upon this point is not conclusive: but the conversation that took place between her and Lethington at Craigmillar accurately indicates, I think, her real attitude in the business. "Then Lethington, taking the speech, said, 'Madam, fancy ye not that we are here of the principal of your Grace's nobility and council that shall find the means, that your Majesty shall be quit of him without prejudice of your son.'" And so on.

It is in vain to contend, after this circumstantial testimony—and it is no part of my case—that Mary was utterly ignorant of the dangers which threatened Darnley. No statesman, however influential, would have ventured to put such a proposal in words—a proposal which certainly pointed to a virtual separation from her husband—unless he had had good reason to believe that it would not be unacceptable to his mistress. Mary neither said 'Yea' nor 'Nay' with sufficient emphasis. She halted between pity and aversion. Darnley had done her great and grievous wrong, and when Rizzio died at her feet, she swore that he would be avenged. It is clear that she occasionally relented (she had loved

Henry Stuart once, and he was the father of her boy); but it must be said that, knowing in a general way that the nobility of Scotland were leagued against him, she gave him no warning, and did not lift her hand to save him. There is no evidence to show that she was aware of the particular manner in which his removal was to be effected, and it is difficult to imagine (knowing what we know of her dexterous swiftness and readiness) that she took any part in the clumsy tragedy which followed. I am, for my own part, from various circumstances, rather inclined to hold that when the train was fired, she was in a melting mood. The other conspirators promised to send to Morton, who had just returned from England, a warrant from the Queen to embark in the enterprise: but it never came, and we may fairly conclude that it could not be obtained.

It is unnecessary, gentlemen, to linger over the incidents of the murder. Darnley, on quitting Stirling for Glasgow, after the baptism of the infant prince, was seized with what appears to have been small-pox. My learned friend presumes that Mary had tried to poison him. In truth, gentlemen, his constitution had been impaired by his excesses, and the poison was in his blood. He lay at Glasgow in a nerveless, shattered condition for some time. He knew that even Morton, the most bitter of his enemies, had been

pardoned, and he feared the worst. Then he appears to have written to his wife, assuring her of his repentance, and asking her to forgive him. The Queen, moved, it might be, by his entreaties (for it seems probable that he had asked her to join him), went to Glasgow, and in the course of a few days returned to Edinburgh, bringing her husband with her. The disease from which he was suffering was understood to be infectious, and the invalid was taken, not to Holyrood, lying low among its marshes, but to the Kirk o' Field, a house which had belonged to one of the monastic orders. Some rooms were prepared for him, and a bedroom was fitted up for the Queen, which she occasionally occupied during the ten days that intervened. On the evening of Sunday, the 9th of February 1567, a large quantity of powder was conveyed into the house by Bothwell's retainers. It has been said that it was deposited in the Queen's sleeping-room; but as the house was torn up from the foundations—"dung in dross to the very ground-stone"—it appears more probable that the greater part of it at least had been placed in one of the cellars. As eminently characteristic of the parsimonious spirit of this penurious Queen, it has been asserted (only it the assertion of an arrant knave) that Mary showed extreme anxiety during supper about a cloak of marten-skins which she had directed a

servant to remove from the Kirk o' Field. After supper she went to visit the King, and returned about eleven o'clock to the palace, where a masked ball was being held. Neither in going nor in returning did she enter her own room at the Kirk o' Field; but if the powder, as appears probable, was placed elsewhere, little significance attaches to this fact. About two or three o'clock next morning the Kirk o' Field was blown into the air. The bodies of Darnley and of his page were found at a considerable distance with no marks of fire upon them. They had been strangled, perhaps when attempting to escape; but as Bothwell clearly believed that they perished in the explosion, it is pretty certain that more than his own retainers had been engaged in the affair.

The manner in which the murder was committed,—so calculated to arrest attention, and to proclaim to all the world that Darnley had not died a natural death,—appears to suggest either an insane ferocity of hatred, or a feebleness of understanding closely bordering upon imbecility. My friend inclines to adopt the former view: "They were wrought up to the murder-point by some personal passion, which was not contented with the death of its victim, and required a fuller satisfaction in the picturesqueness of dramatic revenge." Is such an explanation admissible?

is there any evidence that either Mary or Bothwell regarded Darnley with this frantic and irrational animosity? My friend's theory is that Mary and Bothwell desired to be at liberty to marry, and that with this object they removed Darnley. But this being their object, they would have taken care, if they were not absolute idiots, to send him out of the world without unnecessary fuss; and my friend does not maintain that Mary at least was an idiot. Does it not appear more probable that this highly "dramatic" mode of ridding the world of Darnley had been suggested by some one who desired to attract attention to the murder, and who was interested in noising it abroad?

Now, gentlemen, we have followed the successive stages of the plot against Darnley, and have seen that it was really a combination of the great Scotch houses against the "young fool and presumptuous tyrant" who had incurred their resentment. All at once—the moment the Kirk o' Field is blown into the air—it changes its character, and becomes a domestic drama,—a private arrangement between Mary and Bothwell to enable them to enter into matrimony. The transformation takes place suddenly, secretly, unaccountably. It was one thing in December, it is another thing in February. What is the meaning of the change?

From the day of his treachery to the Lords, Darnley was doomed: it was certain that poison, or powder, or cold steel would end his miserable life; it was uncertain only which instrument would be used, and who would use it. It was a masterly stroke of policy to secure his death and yet to throw the odium exclusively upon Bothwell and the Queen—thus, so to speak, killing two birds with one stone. The subtle wit of Lethington must have sketched at least the outline of the plot. "Kill him by all means," we can hear him suggesting; "but what think you of this plan of mine? He has grossly outraged the Queen: let us take her along with us,—a mere hint of connivance will compromise her. And there is that trusty watch-dog who will obey no voice but her own,—why, a whisper to Bothwell that Darnley has abused her, and I would not give a straw for the boy's life. Nay, hold; can we not teach him to look for something more than gratitude? Why should he be satisfied with a smile? The saint whom he worships is a woman who may be won, and she will not press too hardly on the over-bold wooer. And behind this irrational brute violence—what? James the Sixth, by the grace of God and of Lethington, King of Scotland and—England!"

I do not mean to suggest that this design, as a whole, was formed at an one moment. Doubt-

less it was gradually matured. It progressed with the progress of events. But I am rather inclined to believe that the notion of marrying the Queen to Bothwell did not occur to any one until after the death of Darnley, and until it was more or less clearly apparent that (implicated as the Queen had been made to appear in the conspiracy of the nobility) a union with the most prominent and reckless of the conspirators would excite a storm of indignation.

At this point, gentlemen, I must once more ask you to remember that facts which may be presumed to show that Mary was cognisant of, or assenting to, the design of the nobility to remove Darnley, do not necessarily imply that she had been for some time before Darnley's death under the influence of an infatuated passion for Bothwell, to which her participation in the murder, if she did participate, is to be attributed. It has been customary to mix up and confuse the charges against the Queen, and my learned friend has seen the advantage of the practice. Let me observe, moreover, that until guilt is established, innocence is to be presumed; and that, in giving effect to this maxim, it is your duty, as it is no doubt your inclination, to accept an explanation consistent with the innocence of Mary, if that explanation be not inconsistent with the general

purport and tenor of the evidence. Do not, however, misunderstand me. I do not rely on a forensic plea, nor will I ask for a verdict of acquittal, unless you can say on your consciences that you hold my explanation to be more credible, more consistent with the facts of history and of human nature, than that which has been submitted to you by my friend.

I have pointed out that the Queen of Scots was surrounded by enemies. Malignant eyes were upon her. Busy tongues were at work. It was inevitable, therefore, that the slightest indiscretion on her part would be coarsely magnified, and cruelly punished.

My friend has commented at some length on the Queen's demeanour after the murder. She did not go into hysterics, nor indulge in noisy manifestations of regret. She was "sorrowful and quiet." Her conduct appears to me, I confess, to have been perfectly becoming,—the horror and the suddenness of the catastrophe seem to have taken her by surprise, but she did not shed many tears in public over the fate of the man who had made her life bitter. But, becoming or unbecoming, no one knows better than my friend that innocence often looks like guilt, and that guilt often assumes the likeness of innocence. The test which he applies is not merely worthless—it is dangerous and misleading. The demeanour

of an accused person is in general a question not of the conscience, but of the *nerves.*

One piece of scandalous gossip, indeed, has been retailed by my learned friend. "The Queen and Bothwell," Drury, the English resident at Berwick, wrote, soon after the murder, "have been shooting at the butts against Huntley and Seton for a dinner at Tranent, which the latter had to pay." Drury appears to have been the most credulous of old women, and his letters are full of the most preposterous absurdities. Archery in the middle of February, on the bleak coast of East Lothian, must have been dismal pastime. The truth is, that ten days after the murder, Mary, with a few attendants, went to Seton for change of air, and left Huntley and *Bothwell* at Holyrood "to keep the prince unto her returning."* "The Queen's apologists," my friend continues, "are justified in holding that such a scene was much at variance with the usual decorum of her deportment, and the impartial will admit it to be incon-

* The fact that Bothwell did not accompany the Queen to Seton, but remained in Edinburgh to take charge of the infant prince, is as clearly made out to the historical mind as any fact which occurred three centuries ago can well be. Mr Burton admits that the Diurnal of Occurrents is the best authority with regard to these events, and the passage quoted in the text is taken from the Diurnal. Yet Mr Burton, disregarding the conclusive evidence of the Diurnal for Drury's ridiculous gossip, calmly affirms that at Seton "she had for her court the ever-present Bothwell," &c. (iv. 355).

sistent with her power of dissimulation : but there remains the consideration that she was then the victim of an infatuation which broke through all the defences of her strong nature." * Victim of infatuation, indeed! Of course she was infatuated, if she behaved as she is alleged to have behaved. How does my friend reason? He has no difficulty in believing what he admits is a monstrous story, because the Queen was infatuated—her otherwise unaccountable and incomprehensible conduct being explained by her infatuation. But he cannot surely get the benefit of the infatuation until he proves that it existed; and when the proof is examined we find that it consists of these and similar inventions of the enemy. The sole proof of the infatuation are allegations which, except for the infatuation, would be incredible, and which are contradicted not only by their inherent incredibility, but by the real evidence that has been recovered.

My learned friend is disposed to make much of what may be called the popular conviction of the time. "A passionate instinct," he says, "divined their double guilt." But the passionate instinct did not divine Mary's guilt at least, for some time: it was not till a month later that the Queen's name was generally introduced.† These passion-

* Burton, iv. 356.

† Burton, iv. 361.

ate popular instincts, moreover, are in general sadly capricious and misdirected. If we choose to admit the validity of this test, we must conclude that Queen Elizabeth was the mistress of the Earl of Leicester, and that she aided him in the murder of Amy Robsart. Cecil, Elizabeth's own minister, distinctly asserted, in a well-known letter, that the popular belief was well-founded. Nobody, I presume, now supposes that Elizabeth was Leicester's mistress; yet the allegation of Mary's guilty partiality for Bothwell rests upon testimony of a far less weighty kind. I have challenged my learned friends to produce a scrap of writing, dated before the murder of Darnley, tending to show that any man or woman in Scotland even so much as suspected that the Queen was enamoured of Bothwell. The occasional allusions to him that have been recovered refer exclusively to his political influence,—which was naturally distasteful to the English faction. The absence of any such reference is the more remarkable when we remember that Mary's most secret life was exposed to a vigilant and severe espionage, conducted by persons paid by Elizabeth's ministers, and whose voluminous correspondence, still accessible, has been eagerly ransacked by her accusers. Then, consider, gentlemen, how public opinion was formed in Edinburgh in the year 1567. The Queen, as we have seen, was sur-

rounded by enemies who were incessantly defaming her. There were the Puritan fanatics, there were the Lords of the Congregation, there were the English partisans, inventing and circulating, day after day, calumnies against their sovereign. Why, gentlemen, is it not notorious that "the passionate instinct," in this case, was directed by men who were eager to divert suspicion from themselves, and who had joined the conspiracy with the deliberate intention of turning it to the injury of the Queen?

But, asks my learned friend, returning to weightier argument, if Mary was not the accomplice of Bothwell, why did she fail to prosecute the murderers of her husband? I may admit at once that no resolute effort was made to secure their punishment; but the reason is obvious. The greater part of the nobility were involved in the affair. Mary was conscious that every Lord of the Council was more or less compromised. Even had she been anxious to bring the assassins to justice, it would have been sheer madness to make the attempt. The trial of Bothwell was reluctantly forced upon the Council by the importunities of Lennox, and the acquittal was a matter of form.* Still, in all this—observe—

* Mr Burton says that Mary's correspondence with Lennox "is among the most significant of all the tell-tale documents of that crisis" (iv. 356). But it only proves (what we may take

there is no evidence of that criminal complicity with a *lover* which is the sting of the accusation against the Queen.

At what particular juncture Bothwell was induced to raise his eyes to Mary, it is not now possible to ascertain. The air was full of rumours of treachery, and more than once Mary was warned that the Earl intended to carry her off. She treated the warnings with cold and characteristic contempt, declining to believe that the most faithful servant of the Crown could so readily forget his duty to his mistress. There can be little doubt that even before the meeting of the Parliament in April the hardy mosstrooper had been in communication with several of the leading nobility on the subject of the Queen's marriage. It need not be doubted, for instance, that there were many dark secrets between Bothwell and his brother-in-law, Huntley. Had Huntley cared to tell all that he knew, he might have thrown a vivid light upon many of the bloody mysteries of the age. A few of the honester of the nobility appear to have been startled by Hepburn's presumption; but the rest either openly approved or silently acquiesced.

for granted) that Mary was more or less conscious that the proposal to remove Darnley, which had been made to her by the nobility, was directly or indirectly connected with the tragedy at Kirk o' Field.

Such a plot was, of course, very welcome to the faction which traded on the dishonour of the Queen. The least clear-headed of their number could not but be aware that, were Mary forced into a union with Bothwell, her authority would be at an end.

Bothwell was tried for the murder on the 12th of April, and on the evening of the 19th the memorable supper at Ainslie's Tavern took place. The supper appears to have been attended by all the influential members of the Parliament, which on that day had closed its sittings. After supper, Bothwell laid before the assembled Peers a paper, which he asked them to sign. The Peers, with the exception of Lord Eglinton, who "slipped away," complied with the request; and men like Argyle, Huntley, Cassilis, Morton, Boyd, Seton, Semple, and Herries, attached their names to a "band" by which they bound themselves to the utmost of their capacity to promote a marriage between the Queen and Bothwell. It may be safely asserted that no "warrant" from Mary was produced,—a fact the importance of which in connection with another branch of our inquiry cannot be overrated. It is difficult to fathom the motives which could have induced so many powerful nobles to approve a marriage which, in their hearts, they detested; but my learned friend is certainly not far wrong when he admits that seve-

ral at least appended their signatures in deliberate treachery to tempt the Queen to ruin.

Two days afterwards, Mary went to Stirling. On her return she was seized by Bothwell in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, and carried off to his castle of Dunbar. He at first pretended that she had been seized with the view of saving her from some imminent danger; but when they reached Dunbar the mask was dropped. Then the true object of the "ravishment" was disclosed. Her tears and reproaches were thrown away upon her captor. He assured her that he was passionately in love with her; and when she treated his audacious proposition with indignation, he produced the "band" which the nobility had signed. She was kept for a week a close prisoner in the castle. During all that time no hand was raised to set her free. At last, after actual violence had been offered, she consented to become his wife.

This explanation, gentlemen, which is in the main that offered by Mary herself, has been criticised at considerable length by my learned friend. He maintains that the apology is improbable and unnatural. Before examining his argument, however, let me bring my narrative to a close.

Some trifling preliminaries had to be gone through; Lady Jean required to be divorced;*

* Mr Burton admits that a great deal too much has been made of the revival of the Consistorial Court (iv. 380). It may

the banns required to be published; but on the 15th of May the marriage was celebrated at Holyrood. The nobles who had lured Bothwell on were already mustering their vassals, and on June 7th the Queen and her husband were forced to quit the palace and make for Borthwick. But they

be added that a good deal too much has also been made of the "Dispensation," enabling Bothwell to marry Lady Jean Gordon, which has recently been discovered by Mr Stuart of Edinburgh in the Charter-Room at Dunrobin. The antiquarian microscope has often a disturbing effect on the mental vision of its owner, and Mr Stuart appears to suppose that his discovery is likely to effect a final settlement of the Marian Controversy—(*A Lost Chapter in the History of Mary Queen of Scots Recovered:* Edinburgh, 1874). His argument appears to be that Mary must have known that a dispensation had been obtained, and that her marriage with Bothwell was null and void *ab initio*. Had she not been the victim of an overmastering infatuation, could she have placed herself in such an equivocal position? In the view I take of the stern compulsion under which Mary acted at this time, it is truly of no consequence whatever, whether she knew or did not know that a dispensation had been obtained. Amid the tremendous difficulties by which she was beset, a technical trifle of this kind was not likely to arrest her attention. The matter, I hold, is altogether irrelevant to the issue; but it may be noted: (1.) There is really no evidence to show that she was aware that a dispensation had been granted. (2.) Bothwell was divorced from his wife by a competent court, on the ground of infidelity, as well as of consanguinity. (3.) The decree dissolving the marriage on the ground of infidelity was by the law of Scotland a valid and effectual divorce. (4.) The decree declaring the nullity of the marriage on the ground of consanguinity was also a legal divorce. It is true that the decree might possibly have been reduced and set aside on the ground of fraud or collusion; but until it was reduced, the marriage which it professed to dissolve was legally at an end. Bothwell, at the time when he married Mary,

were surrounded before they had had time to rest, and it was with the utmost difficulty that, eluding the pursuers, they managed to reach Dunbar. It is said that Mary, had she chosen, might at this time have quitted Bothwell, and my friend asks me to explain why (on the assumption of the

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was, in the estimation of the canon law, as well as of the law of Scotland, an unmarried man; and every lawyer in the kingdom, Catholic as well as Protestant, could have told the Queen that he might lawfully marry again. (5.) Little is known of the proceedings which took place in the action of divorce (the records of the court having been lost); but Mary, when alluding to the subject, states expressly that grounds other than consanguinity were pleaded. Bothwell's former marriage, she says in one letter, having been dissolved "for lauchful causis of consangunitie, and *utheris relevant;*" and in another, "the proces of divorce orderlie led for resolute causis of consangunitie and *utheris.*" What these "others" were, we have now no means of ascertaining. Moreover, as Mr Burton has suggested, there could have been no difficulty in maintaining a plea of consanguinity, founded on Bothwell's own misdeeds, and for which the papal dispensation had not provided.

If, therefore, my view of the law be correct, it is obvious that Mary had no substantial interest in ascertaining whether a dispensation had been obtained —it being sufficient for the protection of her honour, the satisfaction of her conscience, and the vindication of her civil status, that a divorce had been granted. It is amazing to me that a competent student like Mr Stuart, knowing what a farce dispensation had become in those days, should have thought it worth his while to bring to bear upon a wholly irrelevant discussion such a heavy battery of laborious learning. Readers who are interested in the early marriage law of Scotland may read, with possible profit, and certainly not without amusement, the sixth chapter of the late Mr John Riddell's work on *Peerage and Consistorial Law*—a work curious for its research, its extravagance, and its grotesque animosity.

Queen's innocence) she did not do so. On June 15th the forces of the Queen and of the Confederate Lords faced each other all day at Carberry Hill. There was no fighting, however; an arrangement being come to by which Bothwell was permitted to return to Dunbar, and Mary gave herself into the hands of those who, by their own account, had risen to release her from her ravisher. They took her back to Edinburgh—a banner bearing a picture of the mangled body of Darnley, with the words, "Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord!" blazoned upon it, being borne in front—and kept her a close prisoner in the Provost's house. It is alleged that during this time she succeeded in conveying a letter or message to Bothwell,* and to prevent the possibility of any further intercourse, as well as for greater security, she was conveyed, on the morning of the 17th, to the castle of Lochleven, near Kinross.

My friend contends that, if Mary was not guilty, the languor and facility which she manifested after the murder, and again after the "ravishment," are utterly inconsistent with the marvellous ardour and energy of spirit which she had previously displayed. The argument, at a

* The story appears to be universally discredited, — even Hume and the younger Tytler (both hostile to Mary) admitting that if such a letter existed it must have been fabricated.

first glance, is extremely plausible; but I do not think that it is sound.

For at least a year after the murder of Rizzio Mary was hardly herself, either in body or mind. Her health was seriously shaken. Her confinement took place in July; in October or November she was for several days at the point of death; the young prince was baptised in December, and on that occasion the French ambassador found her "weeping sore," and complaining of "a grievous pain in her side:" in February the Marshal of Berwick informed Cecil that "she breaketh much," and "is subject to frequent fainting fits." There can be no doubt, moreover, that the tragic events which she had witnessed had to a certain extent unnerved her, and increased the constitutional melancholy from which she frequently suffered. "Peradventure it might be better for me to die than to live," she had exclaimed before she sailed for Scotland; and many other speeches are recorded, which indicate that ever and again Mary lost heart. "I could wish to have died!" she said to her friend De Croc, when recovering from the fever she had caught at Jedburgh. On more than one occasion she expressed an anxious desire to quit Scotland, and return to the pleasant land where her happiest days had been spent,—once after the murder of Rizzio, again after the murder of Darnley. A deep de-

spondency had taken possession of her. She began to comprehend the implacable character of the forces among which she was placed,—she felt the net closing round her,—she longed to escape from all this fraud and violence and intrigue. It is clear that a woman thus situated—unhinged both in body and mind—could not be expected to show that bold front to danger which in happier days had become her so well. The sorrowful and enfeebled woman who was seized by Bothwell at the Almond Bridge,* was a very different creature from the high-spirited girl who, with Darnley at her side, had scattered the Lords of the Congregation.

We might have supposed, gentlemen, had my learned friend's theory been correct, that Mary would have enjoyed at least one brief hour of happiness. She had stained her soul with mur-

* Mr Burton says that the ravishment took place at Fountainbridge, a district which is now within the boundaries of the city of Edinburgh (iv. 377). Robert Chambers, in his *Domestic Annals of Scotland* (i. 40), had, I fancied, conclusively shown that it occurred at a spot between the Almond River and the Gogar Burn, where the post-road from Linlithgow to Edinburgh crosses the Almond by the Boat-house Bridge. See the authorities quoted, more particularly the remission to Andrew Redpath for his being concerned "in besetting the Queen's way near the water of Awmond." "It is," says Mr Chambers, "perhaps of all places on the road from Linlithgow to Edinburgh, that which Bothwell might be expected to choose if he had been in no collusion with the Queen, and anxious to take her at advantage."

der. She had cast her good name to the winds. She had placed her crown in peril. For what? To enable her to gratify a frantic and absorbing passion. At length all obstacles were removed, and the lovers were united. In such a union there would have been much to darken the horizon of love: but if it had been a union of hearts, she would certainly have obtained one transitory glimpse of rapture. Yet, on the very day of her marriage, she was found weeping disconsolately, and longing only for death; and her demeanour throughout these melancholy nuptials was sad and sombre. It is clear that she had braced herself for the trial; but she was very wretched, and she was unable to conceal her wretchedness.

But even if Mary had been herself, it is difficult to see what she could have done to avert the marriage. Assuming that she was ignorant of Bothwell's intention to capture her, and that she was carried to Dunbar against her will, what door of escape was open to her? The "band" assured her that all the great houses approved of the marriage. The name of almost every peer of distinction was attached to it. And then the outrage was exactly of the kind which is calculated to paralyse and render helpless the most high-spirited of women. "Let the offence be condoned—let the scandal be covered—let as little be said about it as may be,"—that is what ninety-nine women out

of every hundred would have urged. The instinct of the feminine heart in such cases counsels silence. Even if actual violence was not used, the honour of Mary had been cruelly compromised. "Leave me if you like," Bothwell might have said; "but what will the world think of the Queen who has secluded herself for a week in the society of the most dissolute of her subjects, who to gratify her passion has cast her good name and her fair reputation to the winds?" To have accepted the alternative would have demanded an almost heroic amount of moral courage from the victim; and Mary at the moment, as we have seen, was sick both in body and soul.

My learned friend affirms that the fidelity with which Mary clung to Bothwell after the marriage supplies the best possible evidence that she was attached to him. The assertion that she clung to him in this tenacious way has not been proved, and rests at best upon very questionable rumour. Mary had told Lethington that she would follow Bothwell round the world in a white petticoat,—so at least some one had heard somebody say. But the time at which the expression was used (if it was used—which I do not believe), deprives it of any importance. It was when Mary, thrilling with resentment at the indignities offered to her, was being ignominiously carried into Edinburgh. There was a certain loyalty and faithfulness in her nature

which prevented her from deserting those who, to use a vulgar phrase, were in the same boat with her. The woman who had never loved Bothwell in his prosperous days, may have clung courageously to him in his adversity. And the perfidious hypocrisy which the Confederate Lords were then exhibiting must have been positively revolting to a nature like Mary's. These were the men who had truly murdered Darnley, and yet they dared to flaunt a banner in the face of heaven which called for vengeance on his murderers — "Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord!" When she found that Bothwell's accomplices had turned upon him, like a pack of famished wolves, it is not difficult to understand how in utter tearless shame and indignation she might have told them that he was a better man than any of them. But, as I have said, there is no good evidence to show that Mary parted from Bothwell reluctantly, and there is plenty of the best evidence to show that after they were parted she never manifested the slightest desire to rejoin him.* He passed away utterly out of her life. The delirium under which she is alleged to

* Throgmorton, writing on 18th July to Queen Elizabeth, says that he had advised Mary to obtain a divorce from Bothwell, and that she would not consent. But the reason which she assigned for her reluctance to sue for a divorce at that time (assuming that she was speaking the truth, or believed that she was speaking the truth) was quite satisfactory. Mr Stuart says that "the Queen's resolution to adhere to Bothwell, and

have laboured must have been very transitory in its nature.

Now, gentlemen, let me condense into one or two sentences the results at which we have arrived. We have seen that, constitutionally, Mary was not a person likely to come under the sway of a violent and absorbing passion. Her whole nature was masculine in its moderation, its firmness, its magnanimity. She was tolerant, uncapricious, capable of carrying out a purpose steadily, yet with tact and policy. She was never hysterical, never fanciful. With her, love was not an engrossing occupation; on the contrary, to Mary, as to most men, it was but the child and plaything of unfrequent leisure. Her lovers went mad about her, but she never went mad about her lovers. She sent Chatelar to the scaffold. She saw Sir John Gordon beheaded. She admitted Rizzio to a close intimacy. Rizzio was her intellectual mate, the depositary of her state secrets, her politic guide and confidant: but the very notoriety of her intercourse with him showed how innocent and unsexual it was in its nature,—the frank companionship of friendly statesmen. Had she been Rizzio's

to resist all proposals of a divorce from him, was maintained till the project of her marriage to the Duke of Norfolk was broached in October 1568." I do not know of any documents which support this strong assertion—those quoted by Mr Stuart certainly do not. —*A Lost Chapter in the History of Mary Queen of Scots Recovered*, p. 35-38.

mistress, nay, even had love in the abstract been a more important matter to her than it was, she would have been more cautious and discreet: however important the public business which they were transacting might have been, she would hardly have kept the Italian secretary in her boudoir half the night. Her marriage with Darnley was not exclusively a love-match: it was a marriage to which her judgment, as well as her heart, consented. Her love-letters abound in pretty trifles: her business letters are clear, strong, rapid, brilliantly direct. By the fantastic irony of fate this masculine unsentimental career has been translated into an effeminate love-story,—the truth being, as I have had to say again and again, that no woman ever lived to whom love was less of a necessity. This was the strength of Mary's character as a queen—as a woman, its defect. A love-sick girl, when her castle in the air was shattered, might have come to hate Darnley with a feverish feminine hatred; but the sedate and politic intelligence of the Queen could only have been incidentally affected by such considerations. She knew that, even at the worst, Darnley was a useful ally, and the motives which induced her to marry him must have restrained her from putting him forcibly away. Yet when the deed was done, it is not surprising that she should have acquiesced in the action of the nobility. Bothwell, again, was in her

estimation a loyal retainer, a trusted adviser of the Crown; but he was nothing more. Yet it need not surprise us that after her forcible detention at Dunbar, she should have resolved to submit with a good grace to the inevitable. Saving Argyle and Huntley, Bothwell was the most powerful of her peers. He was essentially a strong man; fit, it seemed, to rule that turbulent nobility. He had been recommended to her acceptance by the unanimous voice of the aristocracy, Protestant and Catholic. As the honest Craig observed, "the best part of the realm did approve it, either by flattery or by their silence." On a woman of ardent sentimentality these considerations would have had little effect: they were exactly the considerations which would appeal to Mary's masculine common-sense. Yet, though she made what seemed to her the best of a bad business, she was very wretched: apart from her own private grief and chagrin, she felt that the task in hand (marvellous as her powers of self-recovery had hitherto proved) was too great for her strength. A corrupt combination of treachery and ambition had wrecked the fair promise of her life.

This, I venture to say, is a consistent and credible delineation; what, on the other hand, gentlemen, does my learned friend require you to believe?

The woman whom he has presented to you had led a highly successful, adroit, diplomatic life for

five years, when suddenly she gave way to a blind, irrational, and devastating passion for a man whom she had known from childhood, which upset her reason, tore her fine-spun web in pieces, traversed the splendid career which a haughty and resolute ambition had marked out. She was borne away on a wave of furious and brutal lust, which left her helplessly imbecile, for the first time and the last time in her life, during an interval of six weeks! The astonishing pranks that human nature plays are known to all of us, and the cold deliberate treachery of a woman on fire with passion has not been unrepresented in dramatic art: but anything so incredible as this story, or, when taken in connection with the admitted facts of Mary Stuart's character, anything so anomalous and incomprehensible, I have not met with in history.

Gentlemen, in constructing the picture of Mary Stuart which I have presented to you, I have availed myself of every legitimate source of information. But he who would arrive at tolerably safe conclusions about this remarkable career, is called upon to appraise, with critical exactness and vigilance, an immense mass of documentary evidence. A good deal of that evidence is sufficiently reliable to be accepted without qualification by the cautious historian: a good deal of it can be accepted only after it has been sifted and winnowed and

attested by independent authority : a good deal of it must be laid aside as unauthentic and worthless. I include in the first class whatever evidence from neutral sources is extant (and of it I need say no more here) : I include in the second the letters and despatches and histories which were prepared by the enemies of the Queen, for the information of the English Government, for their own vindication, or for other purposes : the third includes the depositions of Nicolas Hubert (French Paris), and a series of documents known as the Casket Letters.

In dealing with the second class, I have endeavoured to proceed upon the ordinary principles which guide the critical interpreter of historical records. The source is to a certain extent tainted, and therefore, except when the witness records what he himself observed, or where the hearsay which he reports is otherwise corroborated, his narrative is to be received with critical watchfulness. For instance, in a letter from Randolph to Cecil, dated February 7, 1566, the writer says that Mary had signed the Catholic League. But on February 14, Bedford informs the English minister that she had not done so. In Randolph's letter it is stated that France was a party to the League : in Bedford's letter there is no mention of France. In point of fact, France was at that time standing warily aloof from the combination ; and as Bed-

ford's letter was subsequent in date, and as he appears to have written with Randolph's latest despatches before him, it may fairly be concluded that Randolph, in the one case as in the other, had been originally misinformed. It is nowhere else, in any contemporary document, asserted or implied that Mary had joined the League : and history, therefore, is entitled to hold that she was not a member of the Catholic Confederacy. Or take another example. In a letter from Drury it is stated, that as Bothwell rode off to the Tolbooth on the morning of his trial, the Queen gave him a friendly nod from a window of the palace. But in a previous letter, which contained the narrative given to Drury by an eyewitness of the scene (the Provost-Marshal of Berwick), no notice is taken of this incident. On the contrary, the Provost-Marshal was denied an audience on the ground that the Queen was asleep; and it is therefore highly improbable that, had she been visible at the window of the palace, this flagrant evidence of discourtesy to the English envoy would have been omitted. In these circumstances the historical student cannot undertake to affirm that such an incident occurred. Sir William Drury himself was, as I have said, the most credulous of gossips, and his letters are stuffed full of marvels that might satisfy the most voracious appetite for the supernatural. Randolph was an able diplo-

matist, but a harsh and unscrupulous partisan: and, in fact, the whole of this English correspondence, from the date of the Darnley marriage, was conceived in a spirit of bitter hostility to the Queen.

The only documents produced by my learned friend which I absolutely refuse to entertain, are the second deposition of French Paris, and the Casket Letters. Only one word upon the former is needed. Hubert's depositions were emitted before Buchanan, but Buchanan never publicly referred to them, did not use them either in the *Detectio* or in his *History*, and their existence was unknown until one hundred and fifty years later, when they were discovered in the Register Office. Buchanan was not particularly scrupulous; and the fact that he abstained from using these ugly documents shows that he was conscious that they would not bear investigation. There are many suspicious circumstances connected with all the depositions then taken, which go to show that they were subjected to a somewhat severe process of revision by the party in power; but it is enough to say at present that the only one which seriously compromised the Queen was Hubert's second deposition. The first which he emitted did not implicate her, and in the first he may possibly have told the plain truth. But he was afterwards warned,—" Bring the Queen's

name into your narrative. If you make her guilty, you may save your neck." And he brought her in with a vengeance,—inventing exactly such a story as a vulgar indecent knave might be expected to invent—a story so incredible in the coarseness of soul and the brutality of manners which it attributes to the most accomplished lady of the age, that even George Buchanan was afraid to use it.*

The authenticity of the Casket Letters is a question that must be more deliberately considered. But, gentlemen, I shall somewhat shorten your labours by directing your attention almost exclusively to what is known as the Glasgow Letter or Letters. This is the letter which, if wholly written by Mary, and addressed by her to Bothwell, can leave little doubt on any reasonable mind that she was a murderess and adulteress. On the other hand, if this letter be spurious, it follows, as a matter of course, that

* Lesley alleges that it was well known at the time that, directly before his execution, Paris admitted that he had not conveyed any letters from the Queen to Bothwell. Paris was executed at St Andrews on 15th August 1569. "From that the Regent passed to Sainctandrois, where a notable sorcerer, called Nic Neville, was condemnit to the death and brunt: and a Frenchman callit Paris, who was ane of the devisers of the king's death, was hanget in Sanctandrois, and with him William Stewart, Lyon King of Arms, for divers points of witchcraft and necromancy."—*Historie of King James the Sext.*

the letters which were produced at the same time, and which must stand or fall along with it, (and which are, besides, of quite secondary importance), do not require to be separately examined. Prove that one of the documents is forged, and you discredit the rest: for if it was possible to forge one, it was possible to forge all.

It is in this light that the disappearance of the alleged Warrant from the Queen becomes of such surpassing importance. There can be no doubt that the Confederate Lords privately exhibited to Elizabeth's commissioners at York what they averred to be a warrant from the Queen requiring the nobles assembled at Ainslie's Tavern to sign the famous "band." The Lords alleged that this document was (along with the others) found in the silver casket. If such a document existed, its production against Mary would have been positively fatal. The authenticity of the other documents might be challenged. They had been seen by Bothwell alone. But here was a document which had been perused by all the chief nobility of the kingdom. Yet at the solemn Conference at Westminster the Warrant was not produced. It was never shown, except surreptitiously at York. Now, the Warrant produced at York was either written by Mary or it was not. If it was written by Mary, it is impossible to believe that such a damnatory piece of evidence

would have been afterwards withdrawn by the Lords: if it was not written by Mary it was forged, and the Lords did not produce it at the *public* Conference because they knew that the fraud would be immediately detected, and summarily exposed. We are thus driven to conclude that the Warrant was forged, and then the question recurs—If one, why not all? I believe that I might rest my case against the Casket Letters on this single fact — the mysterious and otherwise unaccountable disappearance of the Warrant; * but I consent, gentlemen, to meet my friend on his own ground, and I select, with this view, the most damaging of the documents which the Lords actually ventured to lay before the English Council.

These letters, as my friend has told you, were said to have been taken from a silver casket which had belonged to Francis, Mary's first husband, and which were found by Morton in the possession of George Dalglish, one of Bothwell's retainers. The casket at least was genuine (so much may be admitted), and it was a stroke of genius to *find* the documents in a case which

* Buchanan afterwards, when writing his *History* (book xviii.), naively admitted that no writing of the Queen was shown to the nobles before the band was signed. Yet Buchanan was one of the commissioners at York! After this it is amazing to find Mr Burton asserting that the existence of the Warrant is still "disputed" (iv. 375).

so plainly, nay dramatically, pointed to the Queen. There were, besides the Glasgow and Stirling letters, two contracts of marriage, some verses, and one or two letters which (as I think may be gathered from their contents) had been addressed to Darnley. These letters and the verses are possibly in the main genuine; the Lords had enjoyed abundant opportunity to ransack the private repositories of the writer and her correspondent; and, assuming that it was intended to forge an incriminating letter, it was obviously advisable to shuffle it up, and pass it off along, with writings that were genuine. It was advisable for two reasons—(1.) Because the attention of those examining the letters would be diverted from a close, exclusive, and dangerous examination of the fabricated document; and (2.) Because, assuming that the forgery was not palpable, the genuine letters would incline the mind to accord a readier reception to the other. The sonnets are very indifferent, and unworthy of Mary, who could write fair verse. If she was the authoress, as is by no means impossible, they were probably written at an earlier period of life, and are to be regarded as the mere play of imaginative idleness. There is nothing very special or individual about the feelings which they portray, and nothing to connect them, directly or indirectly, with a frantic passion for *Bothwell.*

Hundreds of erotic poems have been devoted to the treatment of a precisely similar theme,—the misery of the love which, by unpropitious destiny, is divided from its object. The notion of the Queen during these stormy agitated months sitting calmly down in her boudoir, and scribbling pages of indifferent French poetry, is not one that will be readily accepted. The poetical language of a soul ablaze with passion would have been very different.

I hope, gentlemen, that I have made it clear that, if my friend's accusation is true, Mary during a few weeks of her life behaved in a way utterly inconsistent with the whole of her previous and with the whole of her subsequent career. He himself will be ready to admit as much ; but he will account for it by assuming that a violent unreasoning infatuation mastered and upset this ordinarily astute and politic intellect. It is obvious, however, that the evidence by which an assertion, more or less incredible, is recommended to our minds, must be ample. A miracle, I suppose, is capable of being proved ; but it requires far more proof to convince us that a man rose from the dead than to convince us that he died. But, gentlemen, I have shown you that the only testimony in support of what my friend admits to be an anomalous and abnormal event in Mary Stuart's history, are the *two or three* letters found

in the casket.* Even if this evidence was unimpeachable in quality, you will admit, looking to the inherent improbability of the story, that it is somewhat limited in quantity. And I undertake to convince you before I sit down that the testimony on which the Queen of Scotland is to be convicted of adultery and murder would not be admitted in any court of justice to prove a petty theft.

Contemporary letters, says my learned friend, are often the most important evidence that the historian can obtain. They may be implicitly relied on, and it will not do two hundred years after their date to maintain that they are forgeries. Had the casket with its contents been accidentally discovered to-day, it would have been difficult to resist the application of my friend's proposition. But the Casket Letters stand in a peculiar position. They were produced by Mary's

* The number of writings alleged to have been recovered in the casket varied considerably—in a receipt granted by the Earl of Morton to the Privy Council, dated 22d January 1570-71, they number not less than twenty-one. In 1824, "the long-missing originals from the gilt casket" were given to the world in a bulky volume, by Hugh Campbell, LL.D., F.A.S., entitled *The Love Letters of Mary Queen of Scots.* After the book was printed, it appears to have been pointed out to the author that the letters were forgeries; but he persisted in publishing the volume and maintaining the authenticity of the documents — and, indeed, they are quite as credible as most of those published in the *Detectio.*

enemies with the avowed object of insuring her condemnation. They were produced as evidence at what was in effect a criminal trial. Their genuineness was challenged at the time by the Queen's friends, and was emphatically denied by the Queen herself.* There is an air of unconscious veracity and *abandon* about the old letter which the historical inquirer accidentally brings to light. But the Casket Letters come from a tainted source, and are very *conscious.* They are not historical documents, in the legitimate sense of the term, and cannot be received as such; on the contrary, having been used as evidence in a contemporary suit, all the usual rules applicable to the admission of evidence ought to have been, and may now without unfairness be, applied to them.

There are two equivocal events—and two only—in Mary's life,—her share in the murder of Darnley, and her consent to the Bothwell marriage. By equivocal, I mean capable, in so far as ascertained facts are concerned, of being read in *two* ways. She might have been either the conspirator or the victim of the conspiracy. Now

* Burton, iv. 437, 438-43. I am surprised, after what occurred at the Conferences, that Mr Burton should assert that the theory of forgery was not put forward until after any appeal to the original documents had ceased to be practicable. (See *infra*, p. 242).

the Casket Letters are devoted exclusively to these two events, and they remove all dubiety about their true character. Their brilliant light dispels the darkness. By some extraordinary coincidence the letters which oblige us to read these events in the way unfavourable to the Queen were placed in the same casket. Of the many letters which, in any view of their relations, Mary must have addressed to Bothwell, those only were discovered in the casket which were *needed* by her accusers to establish their accusation. This was rare luck—almost incredible good fortune. In fact, it suggests something more than good fortune,—it suggests *design.*

Now, gentlemen, my learned friend is very indignant that the charge of tampering with letters should be brought against the Protestant nobility of Scotland. I am afraid that in an age prolific of forgery, it would hardly have been resented with the same warmth.* It was not necessary that Murray should be a party to the deceit. The letters were prepared in his absence, and he had merely to believe what he was told. The master-wit of Lethington was there to shape

* The Earl of Morton fairly admits that he had no scruples on this subject. A letter having been received from Denmark regarding Bothwell, containing statements which could not be conveniently published, the Earl describes, with the utmost frankness, how he and his friends had altered and manipulated it to suit their purpose. —*Goodall*, ii. 383.

the plot; Lethington, with numberless scraps of the Queen's handwriting in his possession, and with a divine or diabolic spark of genius in his nature, which might have made him on a larger theatre one of the leaders of mankind. To produce a passable imitation of Mary's handwriting was an easy matter. Her letters were written in that Italian style which she was the first to practise in Scotland, and which plainly distinguishes her manuscripts from the ordinary Gothic writing of the period. One disadvantage of such a marked peculiarity was, that it could be imitated even by an unskilful performer without exciting suspicion. There were no slight and subtle peculiarities of style that needed to be carefully reproduced; if a general resemblance to the new mode of writing were retained, it was sure to pass current with men who were not very skilful with their pens, and who saw that it bore a much closer resemblance to the Queen's handwriting than to their own. The severity of the enactments against the crime prove, I think, not only that forgery was prevalent, but that forged documents obtained ready currency,—a state of matters accounted for by the fact, that while a small minority of priests and lawyers were highly accomplished, the bulk of the community was illiterate.

My friend interrupts me. The Confederate

Lords, he says, when the charge of conspiracy is brought against them, are entitled to the benefit of all the doubts which are claimed for the Queen.* Is this true? The Queen was accused of the murder of Darnley at the instance of men who were undoubtedly Bothwell's accomplices in the murder. What a volume of falsehood, fraud, and perfidy is here unclosed! Their whole conduct was a *lie,*—they were pursuing another for a crime which they had themselves committed. When the murderer becomes the accuser, a false colour is necessarily imparted to the charge. These men, I maintain, are entitled to the benefit of no doubts. They were traitors and hypocrites, and we are bound to presume that in playing their game they would not hesitate to employ any of the weapons which hypocrites and traitors use.

I propose to satisfy you, gentlemen, that those letters or the portions of those letters which incriminate the Queen were not written by her. The external evidence, consisting mainly of the circumstances which attended their discovery and production—and the internal, including all those indications of authorship which appeal to the critic and philologist—must be alike carefully considered. Both, to a certain extent, are rele-

* Burton, iv. 444.

vant to our inquiry. The jurist, as a general rule, seeks to exclude writings which rest upon *internal* evidence only. Internal evidence is too slight, too deceptive, too fragile, to be readily accepted as a guide in a court of law. Universal experience has convinced the makers of law that no document should be even looked at until it is proved to be that which it professes to be. A false witness may break down and speak the truth when placed in the witness-box; but we cannot cross-examine a statement made in writing. From the peculiarities of this case, however, the learned judge has ruled that, in the meantime—however deplorably defective the external evidence may be—he would not be justified in withdrawing these letters entirely from your consideration; and it is therefore necessary that I should lay before you briefly the whole evidence, internal and external, which demonstrates beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt, that they were not written by Mary.

The observations which I have to offer on the internal evidence need not detain us for many minutes. If you will take the trouble to read any half-dozen of the genuine letters written by the Queen, and then compare them with the Glasgow letters, you will see that the two series must have been composed by different persons. Mary's letters, as a rule, are refined in tone,

elegant in expression, harmonious in texture and composition. The Glasgow letters are coarse, awkward, and the merest patchwork. Why, a rustic wench trying painfully to write a letter to her sweetheart would have succeeded better! My friend has discovered that among the numerous letters written by Mary, which have been preserved, another coarse one exists—which is true; but he forgets that it is less a letter than a piece of bitter invective meant to wound Elizabeth to the quick. Then he cannot deny that Mary possessed at least a singular felicity of expression, of which there is no trace whatever in the Glasgow letter. How uncouth and ungraceful it is! It contains one or two impressive sentences; but these, if not transparently histrionic, are clearly over-studied and over-vehement—tragic passages from some of the minor dramatists—not Shakespeare, surely! "Have ye not desire to laugh to see me lie so well?" is a sentiment which neither Mary nor Shakespeare would have uttered. A woman like Mary, taking such murderous work on hand, would have gone to the end with resolute sternly-shut lips, feeling the degradation of her treachery too keenly to boast of it, even to her lover. My learned friend has artfully placed together the most striking passages; let me ask you to listen to one or two of the sentences which he has

omitted: "I am weary, and am asleep; and yet I cannot forbear scribbling as long as there is any paper. Cursed be this pocky fellow that troubleth me thus much, for I had a pleasanter matter to discourse unto you but for him! He is not much the worse, but he is much marked. I thought I should have been killed with his breath, for it is worse than your uncle's breath; and yet I was set no nearer to him than in a chair by his bolster, and he lieth at the farther side of the bed. I had forgotten of the L—— of Livingston that he at supper said softly to the Lady Reres that he drunk to the persons I knew of, if I would pledge them. And after supper he said softly to me, *when I was leaning upon him and warming myself*, 'You may well go and see sick folk, yet can you not be so welcome unto them as you have this day left somebody in pain, who shall ne'er be merry till he hath seen you again.' I asked him who it was. *He took me about the body,* and said, 'One of his folks that hath left you this day.' Guess you the rest." *

* Mr Burton thus skilfully skims over this disgusting passage: "She had almost forgotten to say, that in presence of the Lady Reres at supper, Livingston had rallied her on the sorrowful condition in which she had left a certain person at a distance" (iv. 429). It is simply incomprehensible to me how a man of taste and accomplishment like the late lamented Canon Kingsley could bring himself to write about such foul rubbish in this fashion:—

"The strongest evidence in favour of the letters and sonnets is to be found in their tone. A

But the fragmentary character of this epistle is perhaps its most curious feature. The different paragraphs of which it consists can hardly be

forger in those coarse days would have made Mary write in some Semiramis or Roxana vein, utterly alien to the tenderness, the delicacy, the pitiful confusion of mind, the conscious weakness, the imploring and most feminine trust, which makes the letters to those who—as I do—believe in them, more pathetic than any fictitious sorrows which poets could invent. More than one touch, indeed, of utter self-abasement is so unexpected, so subtle, and yet so true to the heart of woman, that—as has been well said—if it was invented there must have existed in Scotland an earlier Shakespeare." — *Health and Education,* by Charles Kingsley, Canon of Westminster.

The touches of utter self-abasement which occur once or twice in the letters — "You make me dissemble so far that I hate it" — "I remit me altogether to your pleasure"—are, to my mind, I confess, the most signal evidence that they were not written by the Queen. Mary was the last woman in the world who would have prostrated herself in abject submission at the feet of a lover. The whole tone of mind which these passages disclose is so unlike anything that we know of Mary in every other experience of her life, that we are entitled to say that it is morally impossible she could have written them. Then there is another aspect of the matter which, so far as I am aware, has not been commented on. If the letters are Mary's, and if they prove anything, it is that the writer stood in mortal terror of her correspondent. Where or how had Bothwell acquired this tremendous power over her? Was it love or fear that made her grovel before him? Not fear, certainly, even her enemies will admit; and then of any overmastering passion for Bothwell on Mary Stuart's part, there is no trace anywhere else in her life. Is it possible that such a consuming flame could have been hidden out of sight? Is it possible that Mary could have become the humble slave of Bothwell's ambition without some indication of the state of matters being made more or less public? without some remains of the ravage of this devouring fire being visible in her after-life? Observe, moreover, that the sentiment itself is common

said to be joined together in any real sense. The unity of organic life, which works from within outward, bringing each detail into orderly subjection to the whole, and which no forger could imitate, is entirely wanting. In the first place, we have a paragraph of plain business-like description which might have been addressed to the Council (as perhaps it was)—the description of the journey to Glasgow, and her reception there. In the second place, there is a paragraph devoted to a curiously and incomprehensibly minute relation (incomprehensible except in one view) of the conversations which had taken place between herself and Darnley. In the third place, there are some passionate explosions of love and remorse. In the fourth place, there is a table of contents. In the fifth place, there is the interjected paragraph about Lord Livingston—eminently nasty. In the sixth place, there are further explosions. In the seventh place, there is an apology for the *peculiarity* of the handwriting (what does that suggest, gentlemen ?)—" Excusez mon ignorance à escrier—excusez la briefueté des charactères." And in the last place, there is an-

enough—the idea of the woman who is ready to yield up her soul and everything else to her lover, being as old as the oldest poetry—and the execution is not above commonplace, if we except one or two finely simple sentences, which might have been extracted from some old romance, as perhaps they were.

other table of contents applicable to the second part of the letter, applicable, at least, if one remarkable exception is made. For, in the abstract or index this unaccountable intimation (unaccountable on the assumption that the letter was addressed to Bothwell) appears—" Remember me of the Lord Bothwell ! "

This is a wonderful jumble, an incomprehensible muddle—hardly to be accounted for on any rational hypothesis. It might almost appear as if the forgers had got hold of some half-finished memoranda by Mary, and, adding a beginning and an end, had transformed them into a letter to Bothwell. I tell you honestly, gentlemen, that it is the very singularity of this letter which embarrasses me, for it is difficult to suppose that an ordinarily clever forger would have produced such an extraordinary piece of patchwork. But, of course, I am not bound to explain the reasons which induced Mary's enemies to act as they did in fabricating the letter,—it is enough for me to say that no fairly intelligent man—except upon external evidence of an absolutely irresistible kind —can be required to believe that this is a love-letter addressed to Bothwell by the Queen. It is conceivable that such a document may have been patched up and put together by the men who conspired against the Queen, and who were driven by the imperious instinct of self-preservation to

justify in any way and by any means what they had done: it is inconceivable that such a document could have been addressed by Mary Stuart to Bothwell, or to any man with whom she was rapturously in love. I venture to say that such another love-letter as this never existed.

My learned friend, for his part, does not hesitate to discover in certain notable peculiarities of these monstrous compositions, evidence of their genuineness. "No forger," he says, "would have ventured to introduce such a multitude of petty allusions into a fabricated document, nor, after fabricating one document sufficient to damn the Queen to all eternity, would he have gone on to fabricate others." * Neither of these considerations appears to me to be of any weight. Every reader of Murray's letter in which he inventories the documents produced, must feel that an impressive effect is produced by his "Item," "Item," "Item." Repetition is a powerful advocate. The moral impression produced by a multitude of witnesses is undoubted. The individual value of the evidence of each may be inconsiderable; the cumulative effect is great. The resistance of the mind is gradually worn away by the succession of blows until conviction is produced. It would have been stupid as well as dangerous to have

* Froude, viii. 353; Burton, iv. 425.

perilled the accusation against the Queen on a single *billet-doux*.

Then it may be conceded—as regards the alleged minuteness of detail in the celebrated Glasgow letter—that a clever forger would have *invented* as little as possible. But if the details were supplied to him on good authority, it would obviously be his cue to introduce them freely. These slight sketchy touches, these incidental allusions to trifles, add wonderfully to the colour and reality of a narrative. Now it is to be observed that the minute touches to which my friend alludes are found in those portions of the letters which report the conversations between Darnley and the Queen. It is a remarkable fact that another report of these conversations is in existence. Robert Crawfurd was in attendance on Darnley at Glasgow, and in compliance with a request from Lennox he noted down at the time the substance of the conversations which were related to him by Darnley, as having passed between his master and the Queen. Here, then, is Mary's alleged report to Bothwell on the one hand, and Crawfurd's report (obtained through Darnley) on the other. The similarity between the two is astounding; they are absolutely identical. Compare at your leisure, gentlemen, the two passages I am about to read, and then con-

sider whether the one must not have been literally copied from the other :—

The Deposition of Crawfurd.	The Alleged Letter of the Queen.
"Ye asked me what I ment bye the crueltye specified in my lettres; yat proceedethe of yow onelye, that wille not accept mye offres and repentance. I confesse that I have failed in som thingis, and yet greater fakltes have bin made to yow sundrye tymes, which ye have forgiven. I am but yonge, and ye will saye ye have forgiven me diverse tymes. Maye not a man of mye age, for lacke of counsell, of which I am very destitute, falle twise or thrise, and yets repent, and be chastised bye experienee? If I have made any faile that ye wul think a faile, howsoever its be, I crave your pardone, and protest that I shall never faile againe. I desire no other thinge but that we may be together as husband and wife. And if ye will not consent hereto, I desire never to rise futhe from this bed. Therefore, I praye yow, give me an answer hereunto. God knoweth how I am punished for making mye god of yow, and for having no other thought but on yow. And if at ainie tyme I offend yow, ye are the cause; for that when one offend-	"Ye ask me quhat I mene be the crueltie conteint in my letter; it is of yow alone, that will not accept my offeris and repentance. I confess that I have faillit, but not into that quhilk I ever decepit; and sickly be hes faillit to sindrie of your subjectis, quhilk ye have forgiven. I am young. Ye will say that ye have forgiven me oft-tymes, and yits yat I return my faultis. May not ane man of my age, for lacke of cousell, fall troyse or thyrse, or in lack of his promeis, and at lasts repent himself, and be chastnit be experience? And if I may obtain pardoun, I proteste I shall never mak faulte agane. And I craif na uther thing bot gat we may be at bed and buird togidder as husband and wyfe; and gif ye will not consent heirunto I sall nevir ryse out of yis bed. I pray yow tell me yoor resolution. God knawis how I am punischit for making my god of yow, and for having no uther thoucht but on yow; and gif at ony tyme I offend yow, ye are the caus; because quhen ony offenctis me, gif for my refuge I micht plague unto yow, I wold speiks it unto

ethe me, if for mye refuge I might open mye minde to yow, I would speak to no other; but when ainie thing is spoken to me, and ye and I not beinge as husband and wife ought to be, necessitee compelleth me to kepe it in my brest," &c.	na uther body; but quhen I heir ony thing, not being familiar with yow, necessitie constrains me to keip it in my breist," &c.

I venture to allege that the two most skilful reporters in the world, sitting side by side, and recording the words as they fell from the lips of the speaker, could not have preserved a more perfect verbal accord. There are the natural differences between the Scotch and English idioms, and those almost imperceptible alterations which a copyist voluntarily or involuntarily makes; but these are all. Not only are the two identical in substance, but the peculiar phraseology and intricate construction of many of the sentences are preserved in both. I am as certain as I can be of anything in this world that the person who wrote in the Casket letter "God knows how I am punished for making my god of you, and for having no other thought but of you," must have had Crawfurd's words, "God knoweth how I am punished for making my god of you, and for having no other thought but on you," before him at the moment when he was writing. Ask any expert (that is to say, any man of letters), and he will tell you without hesitation that the two documents must have

had a common literary origin, must have been coined in the same mint. Now, gentlemen, what does this mean? The Casket Letter was either taken from Crawfurd's deposition, or Crawfurd's deposition was taken from the Casket Letter. But it is certain that Crawfurd's deposition, which is admittedly authentic, in the sense that it was made by him, was never seen by Mary: on the other hand, the persons for whom Crawfurd's deposition was prepared were the persons who subsequently produced the Casket Letters, and they were the only persons who had had access to it. The inference that the Glasgow letter alleged to have been written by the Queen was in point of fact copied from Crawfurd's deposition appears to be irresistible; and if so, then there can be no difficulty in understanding why the forgers did not hesitate to introduce into the letter all the details which the deposition contained. They could afford to be circumstantial with perfect safety.*

* The deposition of Crawfurd does not appear to have been textually compared with the Glasgow letter before the publication of Mr Burton's History. Mr Burton published considerable extracts from it, being of opinion, apparently, that its verbal resemblance to the Glasgow letter was a voucher for the genuineness of the latter. "They agree," he says, "with overwhelming exactness." I cannot help thinking that Mr Hosack's answer on this point is perfectly conclusive (p. 192 of the original edition of his admirable and elaborate work on *Mary Queen of Scots and her Accusers*). If it is, then the

The same observation applies to another argument on which my friend relies—viz., that there are references in the letter to facts and events

use I have made of the deposition in the text is legitimate and logical. Mr Burton ultimately apprehends the dilemma, and tries to evade it, though the pleas stated by him are not very obviously relevant. Before the document is repudiated, he advises the enthusiast to "weigh the possible influence of that darkly suggestive conversation between Darnley and his domestic, in which they exchange their suspicions about the unexpected visit—suspicions in which murder is an element." Well, we weigh it, and what then? How does "the darkly suggestive conversation" explain the verbal identity of the two documents? After complaining of the Old Bailey style in which the Queen's cause has been advocated, Mr Burton proceeds to say that, to obtain a complete explanation, "we would require to place Crawfurd in the witness-box and cross-examine him." But it is Mary's friends who are entitled to complain that Crawfurd was not cross-examined,—the deposition having been obtained by the Queen's enemies, and having been used in evidence against her. It is difficult to see, moreover, how any amount of cross-examination of Crawfurd could have thrown any light upon the question whether the Queen wrote the Glasgow letter, unless, indeed, he had been compelled to admit that he knew, as matter of fact, that that letter was copied from his deposition by the persons who fabricated it.

I may point out that Mr Froude, in one of his most masterly essays, *Criticism and the Gospel History*, argues with, as I think, eminent success, in favour of a proposition such as I maintain. He takes the case of three correspondents from a battle-field, in whose letters there are *a series of passages which agree verbally:* and he asserts that no amount of evidence would serve to convince us that they had *not* seen each other's letters (unless, indeed, each had had before him some common narrative which he had incorporated in his own account). "The sworn testimony of eye-witnesses who had seen the letters so composed, would add nothing to the weight of a proof which, without their evidence, would be overwhelming; and

which, at the time, were known only to Darnley and the Queen.* Yes,—and to one other—to Crawfurd, to whom they had been communicated by Darnley. In point of fact, the very allusions on which the argument is maintained appear in the deposition which was in the possession of the parties who were engaged in fabricating the letters.

Before proceeding to consider the strictly external evidence, I must direct your attention in passing to the extremely curious discussion which has been carried on in regard to the *language* in which the Casket Letters were composed. They were first made public in 1571, appended to the *Detectio Mariæ Reginis* of Buchanan, which was published in the Latin and Scots languages during that year. There is no reason to suppose that the Latin version of the Detection was not revised by Buchanan as it went through the press; and there is every reason to believe that the Scots version (published by authority of Cecil) was made by Buchanan himself, as it bears con-

were the writers themselves, with their closest friends and companions, to swear that there had been no intercommunication, and no story pre-existing of which they had made use, and that each had written *bona fide* from his own original observation, an English jury would sooner believe the whole party perjured than persuade themselves that so extraordinary a coincidence would have occurred." — *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, i. 258.

* Burton, iv. 438.

stant traces of his vigorous and sinewy style, and is perhaps the most perfect specimen of the classical Scots which we possess. In the Latin version the Casket Letters are printed in the Latin language; in the Scots version in Scots and French. It was supposed for two hundred years that the French versions—thus jointly guaranteed, as it were, by Buchanan and Cecil—were copied verbatim from the French originals, alleged to have been written by the Queen. A very natural conjecture! But two hundred years afterwards a philological contribution to the controversy was made by Goodall, which, for ingenuity and research, deserves to rank alongside the works of the great critics who have exercised their wits on classical antiquity. He proved that the Scots letters were the original, and that the French had been translated from the Scots or from the Latin. This he did mainly by showing that the Scots, so to speak, were idiomatic and proverbial, and that in the French the Scots proverbs and idioms had been slavishly and clumsily reproduced. He showed, moreover, that the grossest blunders had been made by the translators. "I am irket [wearied], and gangand to sleep," said the Scotch writer. The Latin translator, reading "naked" for "irket," wrote, "Ego nudata sum!" The French translator, exaggerating the blunder, exclaimed, "Je suis toute nue!"—"I am

stark naked"—a nice condition in which to write a letter to a lover during a December night! Goodall held that his discovery entitled him to say that, as the French letters which had been produced against Mary had undoubtedly been translated from another language which she could not write, he had incontrovertibly demonstrated that she did not write them, and that they must have been fabricated by her accusers. This was so unanswerable, that a change of front on the part of the assailants became necessary. The French versions, which for two hundred years had been regarded as the identical letters which had come from the pen of Mary Stuart, and which had been published by Buchanan and Cecil without any hint that they were not the originals, were courageously repudiated. Admitting that Goodall was right, they replied,—"True, the French versions appended to the *Detectio* are translations from the Scots; but these are not the letters which were produced at Westminster; the original letters in French are lost; what we now possess are translations into French made from the Scotch translation." Surely, gentlemen, this is the weakest and clumsiest of explanations. The only motive which could have induced Buchanan and Cecil to retranslate the Scotch translation into French would have been—the loss of the original French. Buchanan, however, was the lite-

rary apologist of the Confederate Lords. "To us above all others," are his own words, "it ought to be most grievous who are driven to this strait of necessity, that whose faults we desire to cover, their lives we are forced to accuse, unless we ourselves would be accounted the most wicked persons that live;" and there can be no doubt that they placed all the materials in their possession at his disposal to enable him to compile his apology. Is it conceivable that he was denied access to the original documents by those in whose defence he was engaged? But if Buchanan could not obtain the originals, it is beyond question that Cecil was in possession of the French copies which were left at Westminster.* It was once maintained that the "copies" left at Westminster were in Scots; but my learned friend is too candid to defend such a use of the word. Yet we are required to believe that the persons who were most interested in making the evidence against Mary as complete as possible, refused to use the originals which were in their own hands, and preferred to publish a version which was translated from a translation! It is surely far more reasonable to hold that the French versions which we possess are exact facsimiles of the letters produced at Westminster. But then this

* See also a paper by Cecil, quoted by Goodall, ii. 377.

reasonable view forces us to adopt one or other of two conclusions,—either that the Queen first wrote the letters in Scots and then translated them into French (which is incredible); or, otherwise, that they were written for her—that is to say, *forged* (which is by no means incredible).

But it is to be observed that, while as regards those portions of the letters from which Goodall mainly derived his illustrations, no reply to him is possible, yet there are other portions of certain letters, and, indeed, whole letters, to which his argument does not apply. As regards certain letters or portions of letters it has been demonstrated that the French in which they are written is idiomatic, and that the Scotch versions have been made from the French.* Now, assuming that we have in every instance the letters produced at Westminster, it would appear fair to hold (1) that the genuine French was not written by the person who wrote the spurious French, and (2) that the letters in which genuine French is mixed with spurious French have been, to say the least, tampered with. It is to be observed, moreover, that it is the spurious French, not the genuine French, which contains the passages fatal

* I make this admission; but it must be remembered that the elder Tytler has shown very clearly that the spoken as well as written Scots of the day abounded in Gallicisms, and even in French words.—*Inquiry*, p. 107.

to the innocence of Mary. How are we to account for these most singular facts? I can see one explanation, and one only. The Confederate Lords resolved to compromise the honour of the Queen. They had obtained some of her own letters,—written, it may be, to Darnley, and taken from his repositories on the night of his murder by Morton and the rest. These were subjected to a process of manipulation, and the interpolated sentences may even yet be detected. But something more was needed,—some stronger avowal, some more unqualified admission, of guilty knowledge and complicity. The Glasgow letters were either wholly or almost wholly fabricated. This is the letter (or letters) from which Goodall has taken his most striking illustrations; and if this letter is withdrawn, the case against the Queen breaks down.*

* Mr Burton's reply to the accusation that the letters had been "tampered with," is quite beside the mark. "All questions raised upon this theory are at once settled by the fact that those to whom the letters were first shown, drew conclusions from them as damnatory as any they can now suggest." And in support of this contention, Mr Burton uses the passage from Throgmorton, quoted *infra* (p. 232) and the *précis* of the contents of the letters made by Sir Ralph Sadler. The quotation from Throgmorton does not prove anything regarding the conclusions drawn by those *to* whom they were exhibited, but proves only what was said *by* those who exhibited them. Sir Ralph Sadler's *précis* was not made until *after* the Commissioners had met at York. Of course "those who had the handling of the letters" (to use Mr Burton's expressive phrase) had completed their work before they were sent to York.

Now, gentlemen, looked at simply as a philological question, we are entitled to affirm: (1) that certain of the letters which we possess were originally composed in French, that some of these have been more or less tampered with, but that they do not, even when tampered with, seriously compromise the Queen: (2) that certain of the letters which we possess were composed in Scots and translated into French, and that these are the letters which directly implicate the Queen: (3) that it is reasonably certain that the French versions of the incriminating letters, which were appended to the *Detectio*, are either transcripts made by Buchanan from the original documents, or transcripts supplied by Cecil from the copies left at Westminster by the Confederate Lords, who swore that the letters then and there produced were the actual letters of the Queen, and written in her own hand; (4) but, if it is proved that the letters thus authenticated were originally written in Scots, and translated into French, it is impossible to suppose that they were written by the Queen.

You are aware, gentlemen, that the Confederate Lords first produced the alleged letters of the Queen at York. The letters then produced were written in Scots, and there is reason to believe (as we shall see) that the English Commissioners were given to understand that the letters then

produced were the original documents—neither copies nor translations. But, assuming that the Scots were then stated to be translations only, there is abundant evidence to prove that the Scotch translations even of the genuine letters (that is to say, of the letters which were undoubtedly composed in French, and which do not implicate the Queen) had been wilfully vitiated. Here is one notable specimen. In a letter presumably written by Mary to Darnley, she observed, "Comme l'oyseau eschappé de la cage, ou la tourtre qui est sans compagne, ainsi je demureray seule, pour pleurer vostre absence, quelque brève puisse estre." In the Scotch *translation* produced at York the passage stands thus: "*Mak gude watch.* Gif the bird escape out of the cage," &c. The object of the vitiation is obvious. The Queen was criminally eager to prevent Darnley's escape, and she urged Bothwell to "mak gude watch." The fraudulent interpolation served its purpose. The English Commissioners wrote to London to say, that a letter from the Queen to Bothwell had been produced, in which she required him "especially to make good watch that the bird escape not out of the cage."

Long afterwards David Hume pronounced sentence against Mary on the ground, *inter alia*, that she had urged Bothwell to "mak gude watch." Circumstances have enabled us to detect the fraud

in this particular case; but what a profound sense of insecurity, as regards the whole of these letters, does such a discovery beget!

So much for the internal and *quasi* internal evidence. It is as conclusive as internal evidence can well be. It entitles us to say that it is *highly improbable* that a refined and cultivated woman like Mary should have written letters so coarse and boorish in language, and so foul in sentiment;—*highly improbable* that Buchanan and Cecil (who undoubtedly had access to them) should have refrained from publishing the documents produced at Westminster, and written in the French language, and should have preferred to publish a French version which is certainly taken from the Scotch. But it is impossible to deny that improbable things sometimes happen in this world; and if it can be established by external evidence that the letters were *in point of fact* written by Mary, then the internal improbabilities are of no moment, and must be disregarded.

Well, gentlemen, is the external evidence sufficient to overcome the inherent improbability, and to enable us to say that in this case, at least, the improbable did take place? No, gentlemen,—every step in the process by which we endeavour to trace back the letters to the Queen is beset with difficulties of the most insurmountable kind.

The Lords alleged that the incriminating letters were contained in a casket which had been left in the custody of the governor of Edinburgh Castle, Sir James Balfour, by Bothwell. Bothwell sent a servant, George Dalglish, to recover them; and Dalglish, on returning through Edinburgh on June 20, 1567, was captured by the retainers of the Earl of Morton with the casket and letters in his possession. Such was the story told in September 1568, immediately before the Conference at York,—told then, for the first time, by Morton and his associates.

My friend says, that from June 20, 1567, the ruling power in Scotland took its stand upon the import of these documents.* He is mistaken: these documents are not alluded to in any writing, even of the most confidential nature, that has been preserved, earlier than the 25th of the following July. It was not till that day that Throgmorton the English envoy was informed that the Confederate Lords "mean to charge her with the murder of her husband, whereof, they say, they have as apparent proof against her as may be, as well by the testimony of her own handwriting, which they have recovered, as also by sufficient witnesses."

The fact is, that so far from taking its stand

* Burton, iv. 423.

from June 20, upon letters the import of which was that Mary was the accomplice of Bothwell, the ruling party in Scotland, in a state paper dated July 11 (and in another dated July 21), declared that Bothwell had made a prisoner of the Queen, and "by fear, force, and other extraordinary and more unlawful means, compelled her to become bedfellow to another wife's husband." How did it happen, if it is true that the letters were in their custody on June 20, that a month later the Lords should have "taken their stand" upon a view of the case inconsistent with the "plain purport" of the letters? It is hard to believe that the letters, whether genuine or forged, could have been in their possession prior at least to July 21; and if they were not, the whole story about the letters being taken from Dalglish on June 20 (on which day he was undoubtedly captured) is cut away, and with it the inference or deduction that they had at one time been in Lord Bothwell's possession.

Gentlemen, let me pause here for a moment to contrast the evidence produced by the Confederate Lords to trace the letters into Bothwell's hands—the vital fact of the case—with the evidence which the law demands in the most trivial suit. The Earl of Morton declared on his honour that the letters had been obtained in the manner I have described. That was all. Morton's hon-

our, forsooth,—the honour of Mary's most ruthless and unscrupulous enemy! In any court of justice, on the other hand, what amount of evidence would have been required to establish the truth of such a story? Sir James Balfour would have been called to prove that he got the casket from Bothwell, that it was not opened nor tampered with when in his hands, and that he delivered it to Dalglish. Dalglish would have been called to prove that he got a casket from Sir James Balfour, and that it was taken from him by some of Morton's retainers. These retainers would have been examined, as well as the persons in whose presence the casket was opened. Some sort of mark or docket would have been made upon the documents by those present to secure identification, and Morton himself, for many reasons, would have been subjected to a severe cross-examination. Then, subject to observations on the credibility of the witnesses, it would have been legally established that the casket with its contents had passed from Bothwell to Morton. But none of these reasonable precautions were taken by men who must have been well acquainted with the rules which have always been observed in courts of justice. Balfour, though in England, was not called. His evidence alone might have been of vast importance. If, for instance, he had been compelled to admit that

Lethington had obtained access to the casket, and had removed certain of the documents (such as the "band" for the murder of Darnley entered into by the nobility) which it contained, it would probably have been difficult to convince a jury that the documents subsequently found in it (if any indeed were found) might not have been introduced by Maitland.* Dalglish was not called. He had been hastily executed by the Lords before the Conference, and so, happily or unhappily, was safely out of the way. But his deposition was taken, and—strange to say—not a single question was put to him with regard to the casket. If the story was true, here was certainly the most stupendous blunder that men with a grain of common-sense among them could have committed. The Lords *must* have known how momentous such evidence would be. They were noblemen who did nothing rashly. Recalling the precise and technical legal language in which the different "bands" to which they had been parties were drawn, we may say of them, as Charles II. said of certain cautious conspirators of his reign, that "they committed treason by advice of counsel." Is it not self-evident, gentlemen, that these prudent plotters would have carefully preserved some admission of the fact on which so much de-

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* There is really some evidence to this effect.

pended? If the story is true, the absence of any allusion to it in Dalglish's deposition is to me simply unaccountable.

The omission of any allusion in Dalglish's deposition becomes still more suspicious when we consider the account which the Lords first publicly gave with regard to the *time* at which the letters were discovered. In the Act of Council of December 4, 1567, issued by the Confederate Lords, it is implied, if not expressly asserted, that the cause of their taking up arms against the Queen in the beginning of June was the discovery "by divers her privie letters, written and subscrivit with her ain hand," that she was Bothwell's accomplice. This statement is of course directly at variance with the assertion on which they ultimately took their stand—viz., that the letters were not obtained till the 20th of June, by which time the Queen had been made prisoner and sent to Lochleven.

I think, therefore, that I am entitled to maintain that the Confederate Lords failed to prove that the documents which they produced had been in Bothwell's possession. It can be shown, on the other hand, that the description of the alleged letters given by the Queen's enemies previous to their production at Westminster was neither uniform nor consistent. In the first place, an abstract or summary of the Glasgow letter

was sent to Murray (who was then in London) about the end of July 1567. According to this account, the letter stated that the writer proposed *to go and fetch* her husband; to administer poison to him at a house on the road; if the attempt to poison did not succeed, to have him blown up *on the night of the marriage of one of her servants;* and it concluded by entreating her lover either to poison or to divorce his wife! It is all very well to say that this rough draft (as I may call it) is in a general way an accurate *précis* of the Glasgow letter; but even my friend, when he comes to compare them, must admit that it is far stronger and more circumstantial than that ultimately produced.* Murray adds, that he had been informed that the letter was "written in her own hand, and signed with her name."† In the Act of Council to which I have alluded (4th December

* I would have been disposed to say, looking at the documents with a critical eye, that they are as unlike each other as could well be imagined. The abstract sent to Murray is, moreover, open to the observation that it is impossible to believe that such an accurate and circumstantial *anticipation* of the actual course of events (*e.g.*, Darnley to be blown up *on the night of the marriage* of one of the Queen's servants) was or could have been written months *before* their occurrence.

† It has not been noticed, I think, that this letter from Murray conclusively disposes of Hume's ingenious argument that the word "subscrivit" in the act of Council, applied, not to the letters, but to the contracts of marriage. Murray says that he had been distinctly informed that the fatal letter was "signed with her name."

1567) it is alleged that the letters were "written and subscrivit (signed) with her own hand, and sent by her to James, Earl Bothwell." But in the Act of Parliament which was passed a few days later, the letters are simply described as being "hailly written with her awin hand."* They are no longer alleged to be signed, and in point of fact the letters produced were neither signed nor addressed.†

"Not signed!" and yet from July to December the parties using the letters pretended that they bore Mary's signature. Any person accidentally lighting upon such documents would naturally in the first instance turn to the signature; and it is clear from the careful manner in which the description of the signature is introduced, both in Murray's letter and in the Act of Council, that

* Some of the Queen's friends were members of this Parliament, and a good deal has been made of the fact that they did not protest against the terms of the Act. But the failure to do so was satisfactorily explained in the protest of the Convention held at Dumbarton, September 1568.

† A writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1760—Dr Johnson ?) has this acute remark: "The difference between "written and subscribed," and "wholly written," gives just reason to suspect first, a *forgery*, and then *a variation of the forgery*. It is, indeed, very remarkable that the first account asserts *more* than the second, though the second contains *all* the truth : for the letters, whether written by the Queen or not, were not subscribed by her. And had the second account differed from the first only by something added, the first might have contained truth, though not all the truth : but as the second corrects the first by diminution, the first cannot be free from fraud."

the Lords fully understood the importance that would be attached to it. I cannot undertake to explain why the letters ultimately produced by them were not signed. They may have felt instinctively that no woman in her senses would be likely to attach her name to such monstrous confessions. It is more probable, however, that they did not venture to forge Mary's name, seeing that her manner of signing (all sorts of official letters and deeds bearing of course her signature only) must have been familiar to a great number of persons who were not acquainted with her manner of writing.

"Not addressed!" This also is a most important omission. Assuming that the letters were written by Mary, we can only *infer* from their contents that they were addressed to Bothwell. But the omission is important in another light. Select the most innocent letter in the world (say from a wife to her husband), and falsely affirm that it was addressed to a different person, and it becomes charged with criminality. The intelligible allusions are invested with a guilty meaning—those which are barely intelligible are twisted into vile significance—unutterable sin is cloaked in those which are entirely incomprehensible. The Lords had no doubt plenty of Mary's letters to Darnley and others to pick and choose among, and by simply asserting that they were addressed to

Bothwell, the language of wifely regard was converted into the language of criminal familiarity.

Before leaving this point it is important to notice that a piece of evidence was produced by the Lords which seems to exclude the possibility of the Glasgow letters (again assuming that they were written by Mary) having been *received* by Bothwell. Mary on her way to Glasgow, parted on January 23d from Bothwell, who returned to Edinburgh. The 23d was a Wednesday, and the Queen reached Glasgow next day. The Glasgow letters (three in one view, two in another) must have been written on Friday and Saturday. Paris says that he and Beaton took them to Edinburgh, where they were delivered to Bothwell. But, according to Murray's Journal, which was produced at Westminster, Bothwell went to Liddesdale on the 24th, and did not return to Edinburgh till the 28th, on which day the Queen also returned. If Murray's Journal is to be relied on, it is simply impossible that the letters could have reached Bothwell at Edinburgh. It is obvious besides that Mary, if she sent the letters, must have believed that Bothwell was in Edinburgh. Now he went to Liddesdale the day after he parted from her, and it is difficult to understand (especially if they were so intimate as to be engaged in planning a murder which was to be speedily accomplished) why he should have left her in ignorance of his

movements. The fair presumption certainly is, that she knew where he was, and this presumption is not consistent with the assertion that she wrote to him at Edinburgh. But, whether she wrote or did not write, the letters, it is plain, could not have been received by him *there* during her absence, as Paris falsely asserted.*

To proceed.

When Mary reached England after the disastrous battle of Langside, Elizabeth proposed that the matters in dispute between her and her subjects should be referred to a Commission. Mary at once, and Murray after considerable hesitation, agreed to the reference. Mary's instructions to her Commissioners contained the following article: "In case they allege they have any writings of mine which may infer presumptions against me, ye shall desire that the principals be produced, *and that I myself may have inspection thereof and*

* There is another curious circumstance. In June 1568, Lennox, who was in England, wrote to Crawfurd, who was in Glasgow, "by all possible methods to search for more matters against her," and, *inter alia*, to ascertain "if she used to send any messages to Edinburgh, and by whom"—while she was with Darnley in Glasgow. Crawfurd's deposition was the result of this commission. But there is not a word in it about any letter having been despatched by the Queen while she remained in Glasgow. If two of the domestics in attendance upon Mary (she appears to have had only a small retinue) had been sent to Edinburgh or elsewhere during that brief visit, is it conceivable that Crawfurd could have been kept in ignorance of the fact?

make answer thereto; for ye shall affirm in my name I never wrote anything concerning that matter to any creature : and if any such writings there be, they are false and feigned, forged and invented by themselves to my dishonour and slander ; and there are persons in Scotland, both men and women, who can counterfeit my handwriting, and write the like manner of writing which I use as well as myself, and principally such as are in company with themselves." The Commissioners —the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Sussex, and Sir Ralph Sadler—met at York in the beginning of October; and, on the 21st, were secretly, and in the absence of Mary's representatives, waited upon at their lodgings by the representatives of the Confederate Lords. The Casket Letters were then exhibited for the first time "in private and secret conference." The letters were in the Scotch language, and, as already observed, it is tolerably clear that the Scotch Commissioners represented that the letters then and there produced were in the handwriting of Mary. "And these men here do constantly affirm the said letters and other writings *which they produce of her own hand, to be her own hand indeed.*" But however this might be, the Commissioners cautiously avoided expressing any decided opinion upon the authenticity of the letters. "In a paper here enclosed," they proceed, "we have noted to your Majesty

the chief and special points of the said letters, *written, as they say, with her own hand,* to the intent it may please your Majesty to consider of them, and so to judge whether the same be sufficient to convince her of the detestable crime of the murder of her husband, which, in our opinions and consciences, *if the said letters be written with her own hand,* is very hard to be avoided." "If the said letters be written with her own hand," then of course there could be no doubt whatever of her guilt. The Earl of Sussex, after examining the letters, addressed a confidential letter to Cecil, in which the tone of doubt apparent in the official letter is strongly emphasised. The Lords will not venture, he says, to accuse the Queen of murder by producing her letters, as in that event "she will deny them, and accuse the most of them of manifest consent to the murder, *hardly to be denied,* so as upon the trial on both sides her proofs will judicially fall best out, *as it is thought.*" "And now touching my opinion of the matter," he continues, "I think surely no end can be made good for England except the person of the Scotch Queen be detained by one means or other in England." To accomplish this object the Queen must be proved guilty of the murder. But "if this will not fall out sufficiently (*as I doubt it will not*) to determine judicially, if she denies her letters," another course which he points out, and to which I will

advert immediately, would require to be adopted. The sagacious and experienced Sussex, it is clear, had formed an extremely unfavourable opinion of the value of the documents which the Lords had produced at York.

The Conference adjourned to Westminster (where the whole of the Council were added to the Commission), and in the absence of Mary's Commissioners certain of the documents were again produced—this time in French. The Lords manifested the utmost reluctance to lay them before the Council; but Cecil, by a clever move, succeeded in forcing their hand. Copies were taken, and these copies were left with the Council; "which writings," says the minute, "being copied, *were read in French*, and a due collation made thereof as near as could be by reading and inspection, and made to accord with the originals which the said Earl Murray required to be redelivered." No examination of the letters (with the view of testing their genuineness) was made at Westminster: all that was done was to collate the copies with the originals, which were immediately returned to the Lords. When the letters had been duly copied and collationed, the Council, along with six of the great nobles, were summoned to meet at Hampton Court. The results of the Conference were laid before them. The casket was again produced. Then, but not till then, the letters were compared with

genuine letters addressed to Elizabeth. Why this vitally important examination should have been delayed till the last moment, and why, when it did take place, it should have been hastily slurred over, are facts which have not been explained. No expert was called in, and the examination was of the most suspiciously cursory and unscientific kind. "It is to be noted," Cecil frankly admits, "that at the time of the producing, showing, and reading of all these foresaid writings, *there was no special choice nor regard had to the order of the producing thereof:* but the whole writings lying altogether upon the council table, the same were one after another showed rather by hap, as the same did lie upon the table, than with any choice made, as by the natures thereof, *if time had so served*, might have been."

It is known that great pressure was brought to bear upon the assembled Peers to induce them to return a verdict unfavourable to Mary; but the utmost that could be extracted from them was a prudent recommendation that Elizabeth should not admit Mary to an audience, "*as the case now did stand*"—that is to say, upon the *ex parte* evidence which had been secretly laid before the Council by Mary's enemies in her absence. On hearing of what had taken place, Mary at once demanded that she should have access to the pretended letters; but after a good deal of fencing this was finally

denied to her, and the Lords were hurriedly sent back to Scotland with the letters, being informed by Elizabeth before they left that "there had been nothing sufficiently produced nor shown by them against the Queen their sovereign, whereby the Queen of England should conceive or take any evil opinion of the Queen her good sister for anything yet seen."

Such is a plain narrative of the proceedings and results of this famous Conference. One or two general observations must be added.

My friend asserts that Mary, throughout the Conference, manifested suspicious eagerness to prevent the production of the letters. The charge is so serious that it merits particular reply.

The private Conference to which Elizabeth proposed and Mary agreed that her cause should be referred, was purely political in its constitution and objects. Mary was to table a charge *pro forma* against her insurgent subjects, and they were to defend themselves on public grounds. The Conference was intended to be the instrument by which an arrangement between Mary and the Lords should be carried through. But from the first Mary declined to allow any matter affecting her own honour to be introduced. If such matters were introduced, her Commissioners were instructed to protest and withdraw from the Conference. Elizabeth implicitly or explic-

itly was a party to this agreement. The bond was broken by the Earl of Murray. He went secretly to the English Commissioners at York, and showed them the Casket Letters. Mary's Commissioners were not permitted to be present—did not know, indeed, for some days that such a breach of faith had been committed. But the moment that Mary heard of the plot, she took up a position from which she never wavered. Her own Commissioners were scarcely so sagacious; for Leslie was at bottom a shifty, voluble, elastic kind of creature, whose faith in human virtue of any kind was small, and who wished above all things to save his mistress from the indignity of a public trial. But Mary herself always said, "I consent to this private Conference with a view to an amicable adjustment of the difficulties between my subjects and myself. If, however, you bring against me any charge affecting my honour, accommodation is impossible. Thenceforth it must be war to the knife. And to no secret conclave can I consent to refer such an accusation. I must be heard in public before the Queen, the assembled Peers of England, and the Ambassadors of Christendom. I will not trust such a question to the decision of any meaner tribunal. But I solemnly declare to the world that the accusation is false, and that the pretended letters are not mine, but have been fabricated by my accusers. Let them be produced, and let me be furnished with

copies. I pledge my word of honour to prove that they have been forged—no such letters having ever been written by me." But her request was disregarded. No—a public inquiry would not be granted. The letters were produced in her absence. Then she said, "Show me the letters—give me copies—I will undertake, even before a tribunal which has disregarded the plainest rules of justice and fair dealing, to manifest that they are malicious inventions." But again—No. The letters were always withheld from her (even though she got the French Ambassador at last to take the matter up seriously), and she was never allowed an opportunity to expose the deception.

My friend says that she did not mean seriously to defend herself. She would go before the assembled Peers and on her honour as a sovereign Princess declare that the accusations were false. She desired only a great stage on which to display her histrionic powers.

But he forgets that the moment she heard of the charges she set herself to obtain the evidence that was available. She got Huntley and Argyle to declare in writing what they knew; and had it not been for the "protestation" thus obtained, we should never have learned some of the most important facts of the case as telling against her accusers. Why, gentlemen, this single document changed in one moment the whole aspect of the

controversy. It was thenceforth impossible to maintain that the Scotch Protestant nobles were not privy to the murder. How much more might have been obtained had an honest investigation been undertaken? He forgets, besides, that rather than have the inquiry stifled, she ultimately consented to allow the case to proceed before the same secret tribunal. But her appeal was rejected. Elizabeth would neither hear her defence, nor would she permit her to see the letters. The Council, when hard pressed, declared that no case against Mary had been substantiated, and despatched Murray and his famous casket across the Border—with £5000 in his pocket to pay his expenses.

Mary's conduct during the Conference thus appears to have been perfectly simple and straightforward, whereas Elizabeth's was marked by extreme duplicity, there being abundant evidence to show that the investigation was conducted dishonestly. The Queen and her Council did not, as a rule, stick at trifles. The Earl of Lennox opportunely appeared at Westminster as one of Mary's accusers: years afterwards Lady Lennox admitted that her husband had been induced to appear by the urgency of the English Council! It is possible that at first Elizabeth, terrified by what she regarded as a dangerous democratic outbreak, was willing to befriend the

sister Queen whom rebellious subjects had deposed. But even at York the Conference had assumed a complexion decidedly hostile to Mary. The remarkable letter from Sussex to Cecil throws a clear light upon the spirit in which the inquiry was thereafter conducted. "The object of the Council should be to retain Mary as a prisoner in England, and this could be effected only by rendering the breach between her and the Lords irreparable. If they could be induced to assail her honour, it was highly improbable that any truce, however hollow, could thenceforth be patched up between them. The pretended letters could not, indeed, be safely subjected to public investigation and hostile criticism, but they might be privately produced and their tenor would be noised abroad. The mere rumour that such letters had been produced would cast a slur upon Mary's reputation, and lessen her influence in England, where she was growing dangerously powerful." Such was the substance of this remarkable communication; and whoever examines the subsequent proceedings of the Conference—the anxiety of the English Council to obtain the letters, and their steady persistent resolution to prevent Mary and her friends from examining them—will find that the advice was acted upon to the letter.

The Council, as we have seen, did not venture

to condemn the Queen, nor to declare that the letters were genuine; but even if such a declaration had been made, what would it have been worth? There are certain plain rules regarding the admission of evidence which are invariably observed in courts of justice. That reasonable precautions shall be taken to prevent documents from being tampered with; that in the event of challenge they shall be legally and competently authenticated; that there shall be no break in the chain which connects them with the accused; that the accused shall be duly informed of their nature, and that he or his advisers shall have free access to them,—it has been found that the observance of some such rules as these is essential to the exclusion of false testimony, and to the righteous administration of justice. To call the perfunctory and unscientific investigation made by an assembly notoriously hostile to the Queen, *a fair trial*, in this sense, or indeed in any sense, would be a mockery and an impertinence.

This, gentlemen, is the external evidence which has been produced to authenticate the Casket Letters. It required, as you will recollect, to be ample, conclusive, overwhelming. Nothing short of absolute demonstration would suffice to convince any one acquainted with her other writings that these monstrous letters—so awkward, so uncouth, so patched and blotted—came from the

practised and persuasive pen of Mary Stuart! My learned friend contends that the external evidence is sufficient. I maintain that it is ridiculously and absurdly inadequate. It is for you, gentlemen, to judge between us.

Now, gentlemen, we are at last in a position to estimate the weight of the final argument on which my friend relied,—viz., the impossibility that any trick should have been practised which should not have been seen through by Cecil, Walsingham, Knox, the French Court, the Spanish Court, the whole of Europe; and the further impossibility that men in Cecil and Walsingham's position would have sanctioned such a trick, or that Catholic Europe would not have protested against it.

"It may be easy for my learned brother," to use my friend's own words, "to suppose men like Burghley or Walsingham or John Knox to have been accomplices in a forgery—it is to me impossible. He can account to himself for the acquiescence of the Catholic world, French, Spaniards, Pope, and the rest, in the defamation of Mary Stuart. Knowing as I do that she was the very hinge on which the future of the Catholic Church revolved, that all their hopes were wrapped up in her, and that to have proved her innocent if they could, or even to have asserted her innocence before Europe, and defied Elizabeth to prove her

guilty, would have been a matter of perfectly transcendent importance to them, their utter silence about it for ten years is to me utterly inexplicable on any hypothesis but one. He speaks of Lethington as a person who might have forged the letters; and doubtless if the letters were forged, Lethington knew by whom it was done. Now consider Lethington's later life. He devoted himself soul and body to Mary Stuart's interest. He married one of her Marys. He was the person whom evidently she trusted more completely than any one else in Scotland. Can my friend seriously suppose that she would have thrown herself on the support of the man whom she knew to have forged her handwriting to prove her a murderer, and thus to have been the cause of all her misery? Can he seriously suppose that Maitland would have allowed a secret to die with him which, if told, would have overwhelmed the enemies of the cause to which he had devoted himself, with instant infamy? I do not hesitate to say that if any definite proof could have been produced that the letters were forgeries, Elizabeth's throne would not have been worth a month's purchase." These considerations, weighty in themselves, are put to you with a force of expression which shows how entirely they have recommended themselves to the mind of my learned friend. But are they so irresistible, after all?

Cecil and Walsingham, we may admit, were great and sagacious if not stainless politicians, and could, no doubt, have seen through the "trick" if they had chosen. But did they choose? On the contrary, is it not abundantly clear, from the equivocal attitude assumed by the English Government during the Conference, that they did *not* choose? Then my learned friend cannot understand how, on the assumption that Lethington was a party to the fraud, he could have subsequently regained the confidence of his mistress. Of course, if Mary had known as matter of fact that Lethington had contrived the trick, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to forgive him: but there being no positive evidence on the subject in her possession, it was highly convenient that the most gifted man in Scotland should be permitted to return to her service. Then my friend's further contention that Lethington, if he had contrived the forgery, would have cleared Mary's character by a voluntary confession, does not seem to me to be admissible. If he was the criminal, we could hardly expect him to accuse himself! That would have been an act of really heroic self-sacrifice, and Lethington was not a hero in any high sense. Such a confession, moreover, would have been not only embarrassing but suicidal—it would have raised an eternal barrier between himself and the Queen. There can be

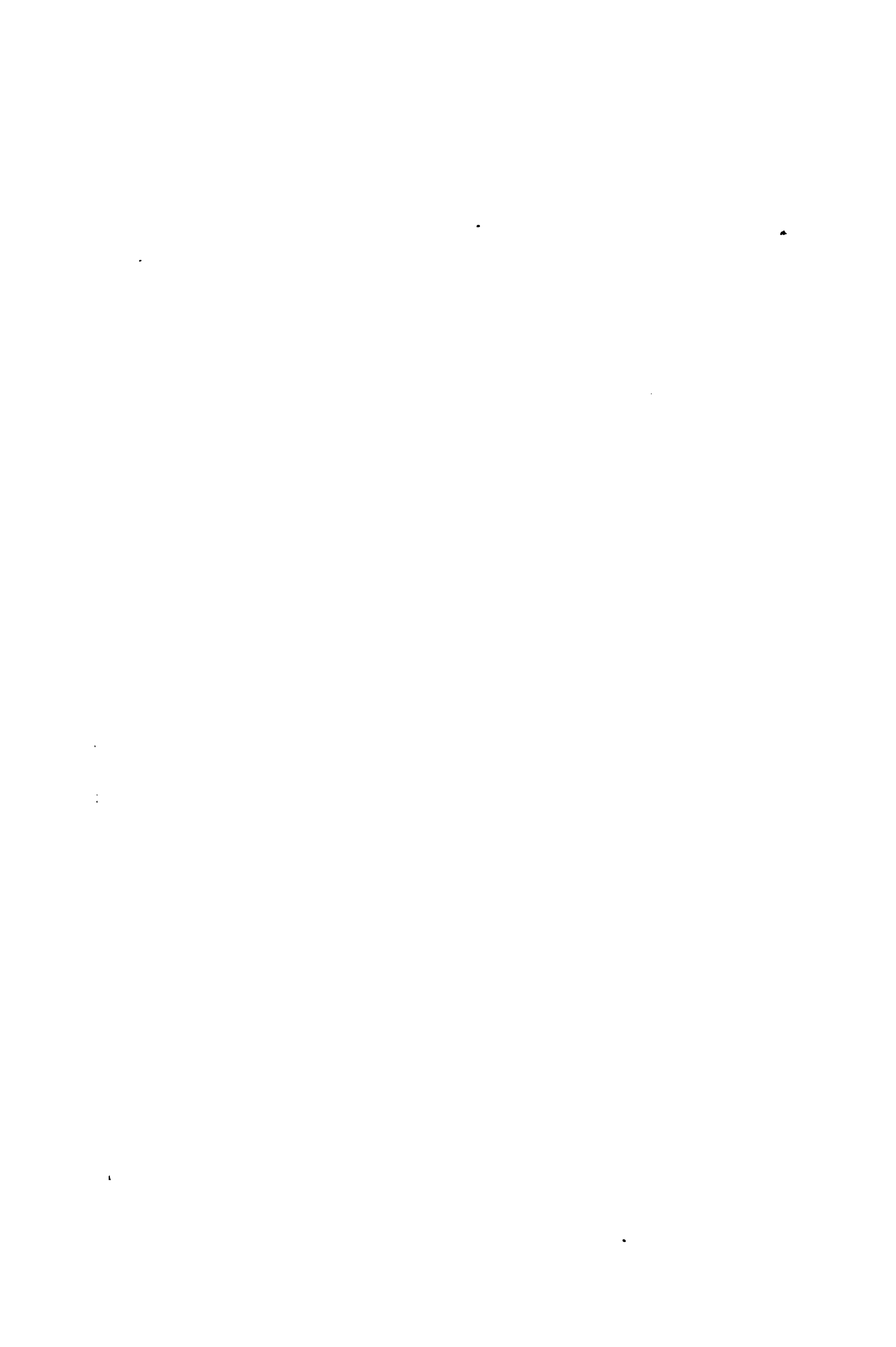
no doubt, however, that, in another point of view, Lethington's attitude towards Mary during the last years of his life, is a fact of the utmost significance. If he knew that Mary had been the innocent victim of a foul fraud, it is perfectly conceivable that he should have devoted himself, with all the energy of repentance, to repair the fortunes of the woman whose life he had helped to wreck. If, on the other hand, he had believed that the letters were genuine, if he had believed, in short, that she was a murderess and adulteress, how could he have thrown himself with such ardour and devotion into her service? And this is an observation which does not apply to Lethington alone, and which induces me to assert with some confidence that the effect of the publication of the letters has been immensely exaggerated. The letters did not alienate Mary's friends either in Scotland or England. The great nobles to whom they were exhibited did not cease to support her. Many of them, like Lethington, sooner or later, laid down their lives for her. It appears, therefore, to be a fair inference, that even when they originally appeared, the letters were not believed to be authentic by those behind the scenes. Cecil was extremely anxious that they should be circulated, and surreptitiously encouraged their publication; but the verdict of the Council had been in favour of Mary; and the

surreptitious publication, though it may have inflamed the popular Protestant sentiment, did not influence the settled convictions of Catholic Europe. Long before Mary's tragical death, the Casket Letters had virtually passed out of remembrance,—even the powerful rhetoric of the *Detectio* having failed to give them vitality as a permanent political force.

To conclude. My friend says that the sequence of circumstance alone is sufficient to convict the Queen. When Rizzio was assassinated by Darnley, she threatened that she would give him a sore heart: within a year Darnley was murdered; within six months she married the man who had managed the murder. But, gentlemen, it is precisely in such circumstances that we are bound to hesitate and to pause. There is nothing more tragic in human experience than the spectacle of innocence, drawn blindly into the net, unable to break the meshes which perverse destiny has woven; and these fatalities of evil fortune have formed the subject-matter of some of the greatest dramas ever written. The net in which the victim is enclosed is mostly knitted by that mocking and spiteful power which disturbs the orderly government of the world; but it is sometimes knitted by the hand of man, and then—then only—do the successive acts of the tragedy become suspiciously consecutive, coherent,

and consistent. Then only is there no break in the chain; then only can the evidence against the accused be faithfully characterised, in my learned friend's words, as "absolutely overwhelming."

One word more. My friend has waxed eloquent upon the glory and the greatness of Queen Elizabeth. I have a humbler client; but I may be permitted to say, that after the closest investigation into her career, from the hour when she entered Holyrood until in the hall at Fotheringay she ended an agitated and troubled life in a really heroic and queen-like fashion, I have failed to detect anything mean, or base, or false, or cowardly in the character of Mary Stuart.



CHARLES JAMES NAPIER

"Thither our path lies: wind we up the heights;
Wait ye the warning?
Our low life was the level's and the night's;
He's for the morning!
Here—here's his place where meteors shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! let joy break with the storm,
Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects;
Loftily lying
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects
Living and dying."

—ROBERT BROWNING: *A Grammarian's Funeral.*

CHARLES JAMES NAPIER.

THERE IS A great want among us of really first-class books for our boys—books, that is, where the moral grandeur of noble actions impresses itself, without undue sermonising or moralising, on the narrative. Sir William Napier's Homeric life of his brother should be cut down to reasonable dimensions, sold for half-a-crown, and put into every schoolboy's hand. For it is the record of an intrinsically great life. An authentic hero has been among us, and passed away from our service scantily rewarded. The ermine of a peer, the baton of a marshal, would have poorly expressed the gratitude we owe him. He spent himself for us, and we made him in return a G.C.B. Only now does England begin to feel that she has misunderstood and mistaken one of her greatest and most strikingly original sons.*

* My admiration of a soldier whose name is being too rapidly forgotten, tempts me to reproduce, in a slightly altered form, the substance of a paper which was written nearly twenty years ago. Some of the allusions, consequently, are a little out of date.

A change is taking place; but even yet there is a pettiness in our treatment of this great man. The public and its critics dwell upon the second-rate features of his character; on the doubtful incidents of his career. We are willing to admit that this may be partly attributed to the bellicose spirit in which his biography has been written. The dust of the dead has been disturbed. The ashes of long-forgotten animosities have been raked up. Of Sir William Napier's conduct there can be but one opinion. The hearty abuse which Sir Charles when aggrieved dashed against his opponents, may be pardoned, and, as we believe, justifiably republished as a part of the *res gestae.* But Sir William's fierce and malignant commentary cannot be read without pain, and our enjoyment of the narrative of the Scindian campaign is sadly marred by the bitter attack on Sir James Outram.

Otherwise the work has been well done. Sir William leaves his brother to tell his own story, and has therein shown commendable sense and discrimination. For Sir Charles's literary capacity was indeed most remarkable. Whatever he wrote, he wrote well. And the style of his writing is symptomatic of the style of his mind—strong, practical, terse, logical, with a dash of the finer sense we call "genius." "Genius," indeed, attached to everything that he did; we see

it in his letters, journals, despatches; we see it in his conduct of war and government. In his literary work it is chiefly noticeable from the strong vertical light it casts on the page, and which makes the men and women he describes stand out with wonderful vividness. Sir Charles, as a writer, is, moreover, exceedingly dramatic: his descriptions of character commonly terminating in dialogue,—the trick of men too hasty to analyse. And though on the whole swift and lucid, rather than eloquent, he says grand things at times. "I think," he exclaims, mournfully, "my life will last until unable to walk without treading on the tombstone of some one dear to me." In the Straits of Messina—"Passed through the Straits of Messina, with the phantom-looking head of Etna looming in the clouds, and the plain of Maida on the left—the glory of brave men perishing with their bodies; the eternal mountain bidding time defiance!" On the anniversary of his father's death—"This day my father died, in 1804, at Clifton. How small others appear when I think of him! He cared little for those things which ordinary men seek so eagerly; he was too great, too majestic for small command; but what signifies all this? Death!"

It will be interesting to gather together and condense into a compact picture—sketched, as far as may be, in his own terse and nervous lines

—those features of Sir Charles Napier's mind which were most characteristic of the man. The capacity of the consummate captain demands indeed a passing tribute; but I am more desirous to dwell upon the qualities of moral and intellectual life which were common to the soldier and the civilian. A more curious and interesting "subject" has rarely been submitted to the critic's knife.

And in viewing the moral side of his character, the first thing that strikes us is the state of antagonism in which he contrived to spend his life. Sir William's theory appears to be, that there is a general conspiracy of the infatuated human family against the Napiers, which that talented house is bound to resist to the death. "The barbarous nurse," to whose cruelty he ascribes his brother's stunted growth, appears as the first agent in a diabolical plot which pursued Sir Charles step by step through life, and which, being promoted by the British Government and the East India Company, was finally, though only partially, successful. Another explanation may be, perhaps with better reason, adopted. Napier was not indeed a vain man. He always formed a modest estimate of what he achieved. He excused himself, apologised to the Duke, for winning the battle of Meeanee. But at the same time he had the most perfect confidence in his

own powers. "A general officer," he said characteristically, "should have no councillors but his pillow and his courage." And he was, moreover, inexorably honest. His rigorous logic permitted no compromises. He could not tolerate the decent hypocrisies in which our society habitually takes shelter. Pressing straight on to the mark of his high calling, can we wonder that he should have come in contact with the men who, either from wilfulness or incompetence, were doing all they could to prevent him from reaching it? Such a man was constitutionally ill fitted for the red tape and nepotism of England. He could not endure patronage: he could not brook, could with difficulty obey, the orders of an incompetent leader. By nature he was intended for chief command. Yet he had a fine eye for great men: Napoleon, Moore, Wellington, Ellenborough, he at once cordially recognised: nay, he made at times the most conscientious efforts to adapt himself to those mediocre generals and governors under whom he acted, and of whose policy he approved. When, with this iron and incorruptible truthfulness were united nerves of womanly delicacy and sensibility—almost *too* sensitive, acute, and tensely strung—it need occasion no surprise that his resentments should have been fierce and frequent. The ardent, anxious, conscience-lighted, inexorably honest

man rubbed ruthlessly against artifices, prejudices, the slaves of habit and red tape generally; and, as could not but be, the sensitive nerves were jarred, and the rude, eloquent tongue spoke bitterly.

Napier's stubborn truthfulness never deserted him. To his mother he was a most tender and devoted son; but his logic was quite as rigorous to her as to any one. The thing was true, and neither fear nor affection could make it otherwise. And to him there was greater necessity to speak the truth out than to most men: he could not smile at a prejudice, and put it by lightly, or quietly crush it beneath his heel—as some men, perhaps the strongest, have been able to do; it stung him at once into angry words and trenchant argument. "The doctrine of despising I hold very cheap: meet every man with his own weapons, is my creed, and failing is your own fault: but fail I will not, without a blow."

As I have said, I see no good reason why these impetuous judgments should not be recorded in print. Why not? They are needful to enable us to understand one of our great men; as such they have become a portion of the public property. If the judgments were rash, hasty, hot, impetuous, we know what the man was, and they will not hurt now. We do not think any the worse of those he scorned and hated: we say

only that they came in contact with this man, and that the two could not agree. He has gone his way; let those that remain go theirs, and do their work well and honestly as he did. We read Napier's attack on Outram, and say, It is well; we read how Outram puts himself under Havelock, and, sabre in hand, rides at the column-head into battle; and we say again, It is well. Both men are very noble at heart: that they come into collision, and that bitter reproaches are spoken by the one and proudly resented by the other, is grievous, lamentable if you will, but inevitable as fate. Still they are great men both,—none the less because the antagonism is so vital.

The partisan cannot rise to this view of the question; and ignoble motives have been freely attributed to either in respect of the Scindian quarrel. Napier was avaricious; Outram, jealous. Both charges are false. Napier by nature was perfectly unselfish. He would never accept a farthing from his mother,—"give it to the other boys," he said. He renounced pecuniary reward whenever he felt that it was not his due. "Must work for my pay; better live honest than die a rogue." Avarice, indeed, was altogether repugnant to his theory of a career. For *work* was what he craved for; and the less cumbered he was, the better could he do his work.

Afterwards, when he had a family, it of course became his duty to provide for its members. He went to India late in life, being prepared "to risk all for my girls;" and parsimony in such a cause becomes *parsimonia,* the *magnum vectigal* of the ardent Roman. "My victories," he writes in his journal, "will enable me to provide for my family and my relations, and to give something to John Kennedy's children"—the children of his oldest comrade—"but I have no faith in riches." When told that he had fought the desperate battle of Meeanee with the view of obtaining prize-money, his calm reply was unanswerable: "I would hardly have risked such a deed and my own eternal salvation for a few pounds of gold, and that even by no means sure of being got—on the contrary, all but impossible." The truth is, that the position was regarded by the two men from repugnant and vitally opposed points of view. Outram, with his political traditions, considered the war the deliberate violation of a solemn treaty which had been entered into with the great and independent princes of the Indus. Napier, on the other hand, determined the question as a soldier and a philanthropist might be expected to do. The Indus formed a noble north-west frontier for our Indian empire, and the Scindians were ground down by the cruel tyranny of the Ameers.

What better mission for a great captain than to lead his army into their provinces, release one of the fairest portions of the earth from foul misgovernment, and rescue the peaceful population of the great river from the domination of a worthless family of robbers? That he persuaded himself he was in the right, I have no doubt; though it cannot be denied, I think, that he somewhat too eagerly took advantage of a crisis, which his own policy had largely promoted, or at least in some measure accelerated. With these antagonistic views, how was it possible that the two men should agree?

Besides this unflinching honesty, Napier's moral character was remarkable for tenderness, geniality, and endurance.

His intense tenderness to his mother is very touching. Love for her amounted to idolatry. Not very demonstrative, it was yet rooted in the inmost deeps of his being. "It is not my way," he writes to her, "to talk over these things often, but I don't forget them, and like to dwell upon them with gratitude." Throughout her life, however far sundered they might be, they continued closely knit together: after her death they were not divided. In the heart of the Scindian desert, when the perilous march on Emaun Ghur had been accomplished, he writes in his journal: "I dreamed last night of my

mother: her beauteous face smiled upon me. Am I going to meet her very soon? Well, we shall all meet again: unless this hideous work of war sends me to hell—which is not improbable." Strange words of a strange tenderness! Nor is it confined to his mother; when any one suffers whom he loves he manifests acute distress. On the death of his wife, Elizabeth, he gives vent to his feelings in a prayer which, for dreary and hopeless pain, is one of the most sorrowful ever spoken. "O God, merciful, inscrutable Being, give me power to bear this Thy behest. Hitherto I had life and light, but now all is as a dream, and I am in darkness—the darkness of death, the loneliness of the desert. Oh God, defend me, for the spirit of evil has struck a terrible blow. I too can die, but thus my own deed may give the dreadful spirit power over me, and I may, in my haste to join my adored Elizabeth, divide myself for ever from her. My head, my head seems to burst. Oh, mercy! mercy! for this seems past endurance." He is bound up in his brothers; he never forgets his old nurse, Susan Frost; no good-luck befalls him but he wishes "Kennedy" were present to share it: with the people whom he is sent to govern or subdue—be they Chartist, or Scindian, or Cephalonian—he at once comes into warm and hearty contact. Even for the gipsies and Bohemians of

society he shows good-humoured charity, if not sympathy. "The people are very much to my liking, but the greatest liars in the world."

When a young man he was every hour of the day fiercely in love, and his frank descriptions of the successive competitors for his susceptible heart are very graphic and amusing. Mrs Barwell, Miss Trowbridge, Miss Home, Miss Robb, and pretty widows unnumbered, pass rapidly across the stage. "Between Mrs Barwell and Miss Trowbridge, who is a surprising mixture of beauty, good-nature, and fun, the devil himself is not more flaming than myself; I go about all fire! . . . Nothing more about expeditions, and I am again in love with a Miss Home: a dear little Scotch thing, with a beautiful face and beautiful figure, a beautiful dancer and beautiful genius. My heart is a cinder, and as heat is said to cure heat, I stand by the fire all day to draw out my flame. . . . Well, Miss Robb is middle-sized: her features are without a fault, and she has an ocean of countenance: in fine, no defect can be discovered in her person, and her mind is equally admirable. . . . There is a pretty widow, niece to the paymaster, come among the 50th. She is only twenty-two. Now, never to marry any but a widow has been a vow of mine; and here is one to my hand. She is a pretty thing as a man could wish to

see, and a widow I am bent on." Till the day of his death he remained a constant admirer of the fair sex. "I speak of men only," he says in one of his later letters; "women of all countries are good; or if bad, are such pleasant fellows that it don't signify on which side of the ledger their account stands."

Another mode, and perhaps the most strikingly characteristic, in which this tenderness of disposition showed itself, was in the profound affection he felt for the animals around him—his horses, dogs, cows, camels. He possessed that capacity for recognising a human character in the lower animals which is often a distinguishing mark of creative genius. Sometimes this sympathy went even further, and disturbed and saddened him when any work of destruction, though of dead walls merely, was being carried out. "Everybody was delighted to see Emaun Ghur blown up; to me it was pain. I was cast down, thinking of all the labour and pleasure constructing it had given." Only a man of the vivid sensibilities of genius could have penned that sentence before the hostile stronghold whose destruction signalled his triumph. The barbarian feels no pain in destroying; to the mind of genius every manifestation of man's life and intelligence is infinitely precious.

The frequent allusions to his dumb friends

that occur in his journal are charming. He describes a horse with the relish that Landseer paints one. "Hotspur is about Model's size, but more of an Arabian than a racer, with a beautiful curved neck, and fiery as the devil, yet without vice. Cà Ira was to him as the great devil is to a little one; he was so large and powerful that when angry he was tremendous, and would and could easily have broken his own neck and mine. This little devil is like a feather to me after the great one, and is as much under my thumb as a Mameluke's horse. I hate a vicious horse, but delight in a fiery one, and have named this one Hotspur; it suits his temper. . . . Poor Blanco thinks a bivouac the worst amusement in the world, as he gets nothing but heath and hard riding. Poor fellow! I kiss and coax him, but it don't make up for no oats. He is the most delightful animal that ever was, but thinks being admired by the Lisbon ladies with a full stomach better than my affection with heath."

Till their death he retains for his horses the most affectionate solicitude. He cannot bear to be parted from them, and would no more think of killing one because it had grown old and infirm, than he would think of killing his grandmother for a similar reason. "Molly" (his little school Arabian) "cannot move; she must be left sick. Now I do not like leaving the little

thing behind, nor yet risking her on a voyage, but a horse I must have. So she follows me, and the chance of her being hurt worries me. . . . Anything is better than cutting Blanco's throat after sixteen years' comradeship. I may go to perdition, but not for Blanco, *anyways.* My poor good old beast!" Molly was sent home to the paternal fields at Castleton, where, with two others, she attained a patriarchal age; but the beloved Blanco died suddenly on board ship in the Bay of Biscay. "Mr Ore constantly fed him with biscuit, but the long voyage killed him. How I did love him! Well, I and all I love must go the same way. Mr Ore grew so fond of Blanco that he wanted to say prayers for him, to the great horror of the ship captain; yet I am sure that he has a soul as good as most captains of merchant-ships. Noble, excellent animal! You were good and brave, and faithful as ever charger was."

When he went to the East, he made friends with his camels, and quickly insinuated himself into their good graces, and kindly, clumsy ways. There is no better account than he has given us of "those dear, solemn camels, with their noses high up in the air, looking so philosophical, and dragging nine-pounders tied to their tails as if they were feathers." "I was struck," he says, "by one peculiarity, which makes me hope that the

camel does not suffer from the horrid treatment inflicted so much as a horse or mule. When struck with a heavy cutting whip by the most rigorous and merciless arm, he never flinches nor springs, but keeps his solemn majestic walk, with his nose in the air, as if not touched; if he is drawing, you perceive a sudden increase of energy, but no sudden pull, no indication of pain: nor does he groan. Poor patient brutes! I pity them much, and hope to save them and ourselves from the cursed fools who overload them. In the desert the camel has no rival: his great splay feet never sink into the sand; the heat never worries him; he defies thirst beyond all other beasts, and eats all that is to be had; nor does he require a great deal. All he asks is not to be overloaded; and nature has pointed this out so clearly to him and us, that the beast, who shows no sign of pain or complaint when whipped, makes piteous moanings and growlings when too much is being put upon him: they are his remonstrances, which the two-legged beasts will not listen to, and the poor camels are killed by brutes."

This wide and active sympathy is closely allied with the next characteristic I note,—his geniality or humour. The greatest humorists, as Mr Thackeray has said in writing and proved in practice, are often the most tender-hearted men;

and it may be further noted that few very great men—men of the highest calibre in any department—have been entirely destitute of humour. For real humour infers power, grasp, comprehensiveness, and distance of vision. A truly great mind can play with the facts which crush and oppress a mediocre intellect. Sir Charles's humour was peculiar to himself, though it often reminds the reader of Rabelais. It was sagacious in its riot; instinct with strong common-sense, even when most unbridled. If wounded, his spleen discharged itself in a jest; hurt or annoyed, the spirit of mockery became uproarious. And it was quite spontaneous: there was no desire or effort to be witty. "Nonsense will come, and devil take me if I can stop, for the life of me! . . . What a great relief nonsense is to a man who has been working hard! I have a *quantum* in me beyond the ordinary run of men; and if it had no vent, my death would ensue from undelivered jokes. I am delighted to hear that you are so well, dearest mother, and that you bore the comet like an angel: by the way, no doubt exists in my mind that comets are the souls of good post-horses, who still ply their trade, carrying angels charged with despatches." It was chiefly noticeable in his writing, but it sometimes helped him in action; for in life humour is one of the most potent auxil-

iaries a wise man can enlist. Some of the humorous scenes are admirable. "A deputation," he writes, "of these Banians tried to turn me to account. They claimed from me a debt of God knows how many rupees, due by the Ameers. 'Your claim,' said I, 'was no doubt just on the Ameers; but I never heard of people fighting to pay other men's debts, and cannot possibly set such an example.' 'But then we shall starve and die.' 'Just what is wanted, for I am making a beautiful burying-ground, and you shall be buried there gratis. Set your hearts at rest.' This joke settled the business. The whole treasury would not cover such debts." This account of the Cephalonian bishop is a rich specimen of the Rabelaisian vein: "Meanwhile, to bless us, we have got a bishop appointed, an excellent pious man, who formerly lived by sheep-stealing, which he now calls his pastoral life. My bishop's depth of learning and length of beard are both admirable: he piques himself on a thorough knowledge of the canon law of Justinian, which chiefly rules the Greek Church; and he assured me the said Justinian wrote the *Code Napoleon* out of friendship for Buonaparte, as they had been at the school at Brienne together. Disputing this fact, I asserted that Justinian was king of England in the reign of Solomon, and that an ancestor of mine had been sent to Jerusalem to

teach logarithms to the architect who built the Temple. This greatly disturbed my bishop's theory as to Brienne; but he is comforted by Adam's giving him about twice my pay, an extravagance not to be accounted for."

Again: his power to *endure* was wonderful. We should not, at first sight, have supposed that a man so constitutionally impatient would have possessed in any striking degree this passive virtue. But when left to himself, the little man could bear almost any torture; though intrusive sympathy worried and irritated him. "Do not write any more on the subject," he begs, alluding to his friend Cameron's early death: "*pity is hateful.*" The description which he gives of his own *physique* is, I believe, tolerably characteristic. "I am so thin, so sharp, so Jewish, so rascally, so knavish a looking son of a gun, that mayhap nature never turned such an one before out of her lathe." But the spirit which animated this shabby frame was invincible. Death often mastered the out-works, but could not storm the citadel. He had work to do, and do it he must before he died. The pestilence of 1832 marked him out, but he ultimately triumphed over its most malignant type. "Too hard worked," he writes after Meeanee, "my body wastes away; however, duty must be done, and self put aside. Meanwhile the heat is fearful: I am sixty, and the heat tells heavily

on me; but all is fate." Still he would not give in; he continued to elaborate a magnificent strategic combination "under a heat which mortal cannot face:" at the moment when the guns from the desert announced its successful completion, he was tumbled over by apoplexy. Several days before, feeling himself staggering, he had sent his whole scheme of war to his subordinate at Hyderabad, with peremptory injunctions to carry it out should he die before it was executed; so had he died, death would not have defeated him. But he did not die: he was bled in time, and recovered; and three days after the attack, we find him dictating an elaborate State Paper to the Government. A most indomitable man!

Constant work, indeed, of some kind—"action, action, action"—was his natural element. Without it he pined and languished, lost his spirits and health. But work, especially dangerous work, made him a new man, animated him with fresh life. To no human being did the old adage, *Laborare est orare*, ever come more true. He regained composure and serenity in labour; labour discharged his religious doubts, his speculative difficulties, his moral perplexities, and left him free, hopeful, and happy. "The most troublesome of all troubles to me is having nothing to do,—a too easy chair is the rack for me. I was born on the bank of the Thames, and partake of the

quality of the water—never good until fermented and stirred up; then, when all other water becomes bad, it freshens from contrariness." Before dangerous work especially he grew bright and buoyant. His spirit bounded lion-like to meet the crisis. Almost the only occasion when he confesses in his journal that he has been supremely happy is in the short record entered on the day previous to the battle of Meeanee,—the day before he desperately hurled his handful against forty thousand armed men, the pick of the warlike chivalry of Beloochistan. "My troops are in high spirits: so am I."

Laborare est orare,—that was the fundamental article of his creed. He was looked upon with suspicion by the religious world: for he felt (as most truly devout men have felt) that the relations between man and his Maker are too intimate and personal to admit of the interposition of any meddling priest. Whether he accepted any strictly dogmatic religious scheme may be doubted. No such true life, indeed, could work itself out, without unconsciously, at least, assimilating much of the Highest Wisdom. And the things that he says on this and kindred subjects are many of them profound and memorable. "Our own folly is the cause of our misery, and we should bear the results of folly patiently, *looking forward, not back.*" "What will the

coming year produce? Fate settles these matters luckily; for if God left them to us, what wild work we should make!" "Yet my wish is not to be made hay of yet; no time suits one to die." "I cannot believe," he writes, when demanding chaplains for his force, "that such a Government will allow Mammon to cross the path of our Saviour, to stand between the soldier and his God, and let his drooping mind thirst in vain for the support which his Church ought to afford." In days like these, when an arbitrary separation between the secular and religious life is attempted to be set up, the example of a man whose iron rule of right was not laid by for Sunday or holiday use, but beat with every beat of his heart, is not without a substantial value.

The sentiments which he entertained as to the relations subsisting between man and the invisible world—so far as I can gather from this book—chiefly related to two subjects. In the first place, the world itself presented him with the spectacle of an intelligent will working under an inexorable fate. "I also am anxious about my brothers, but it is not an anxiety that gives me uneasiness; it only makes me anxious for news: predestinarianism is too strong in me to allow of my suffering from these things; it is only what can be altered by ourselves that agitates me."

"Age, like a river, goes down, down, and there is no up. Fate! Fate! Let me go to work." There is in his mind this constant apprehension of an Avenger, against whom we contend in vain, but whom, nevertheless, it is our duty to disregard while we do our work honestly and heartily. "Stoicism is only good when we cannot help ourselves. Epictetus would have been more to my taste if he had broken his master's skull instead of patiently letting his own be broke." The other subject which most affected his mind was *death*. The Beyond perplexed him with its still mystery. "My friend Stewart is dead: *I wonder how he likes it.* Heigh-ho! this is a weary world, and I will go to sleep, which is like death. Yet we love sleep, and fear death. Strange! *if* they be alike, death must be indeed a blessing." The idea had evidently obtained an engrossing authority over his mind; yet he at no time quailed before it, but met it as he met all other accidents of this mortal state, calmly, and with the resolve of brave men who may be awe-stricken, but not fear-stricken.

Lastly, let it be noted that whatever he did, down to the minutest detail, he did with his whole heart. "So far from thinking with you that my reforming efforts are useless, I hold them to be of consequence. In all struggles, the meanest, if he does his utmost, is of use;

the drum-boy, eight years old, ought to imagine the battle rests on himself and his drum." It did not matter to him what the subject was; whatever it might be, he brought the whole energy of his character to bear on it, and a few hours found him enthusiastic in its pursuit. While in Bermuda, the Colonel became a gardener, and at length was forced to give up the amusement, finding that it grew too engrossing. "Why, gardening has become so interesting to me here as to force me to give it up, lest neglect of business should follow; it is a kind of madness with me. Gardening from morning to night should be my occupation, if there was any one to command the regiment; it won't let me think of anything else. So hang the garden, and the sweet red and blue birds that swarm around! and hang dame Nature for making me love such things, and women's company, more than the sublime pleasure of cutting people's throats and teaching young men to do so!" In Cephalonia he took to road-making, and he quickly came to love his road as heartily as he loved his horse. "My wish is to be buried on the summit of Liberales, in the old chapel; not caring for church or chapel, but *to lie on the top of the road.* Many a poor mule's soul will say a good word for me at the last day, when they remember the old road."

Such was the moral side of Sir Charles Napier's character; the intellectual is not less interesting.

His intellect was chiefly noticeable for its darting vigour and activity. He was one of the most versatile of men. His strong human sympathies, as we have seen, enfolded all sorts of things and people; so did his intellect. Nothing came amiss to that capacious and inventive brain. He discussed "lawyers," "languages," "teaching," the rights of labour, the maxims of government, the principles of taxation and finance, the position of the Church, the formation of roads, lighthouses, public buildings, with equal relish and ease. There is scarcely a single subject of interest that, in his letters and journals, he has not reasoned out; briefly, indeed, but with close logic and mastery. His conclusions were drawn rapidly, often abruptly; they were not unfrequently evolved from some detached detail that had fastened itself on his mind, but somehow they generally proved correct,—the details being instinctively referred to the operation of some leading principle, and classified by the laws of sound common-sense. I could quote many pregnant passages on each of the topics I have mentioned well worthy to be had in remembrance; the following, on the functions of the bench, must suffice: "The mere

fact that a judge has deviated from the letter of the law, is a great evil; it draws with it an assumption of power, discretionary power, which it is the object of law to take away from a judge: *laws are made to prevent him from acting according to his conscience, and to force him to act according to law.*"

But Napier was not merely a man of intellectual vigour and versatility, he was pre-eminently a man of genius. There was, in whatever he put his hand to, a dash of the "divine madness" of the Irishman and the poet. His letters and journals exhibit the speculative life of genius; and his practical life was genius in action. The public offices which he held required both military and civil capacity; let us consider him as the *soldier* and the *administrator.*

First, as the administrator. Napier was governor of Cephalonia and Scinde, and at one time was on the eve of starting to assume the government of Australia.

To govern Australia constituted his earliest and most fondly cherished ambition; and the desire strikingly illustrates the originality and vastness of his conceptions. In many of his early letters and comments he, as it were, *rehearses* his career; showing *why* he would do what he subsequently *did* do; putting on a logical basis, so to speak, the scheme which he

afterwards carried out in practice. He lost the opportunity to realise his magnificent idea of an Australasian kingdom; but, judging from his career in Cephalonia, and in Scinde, we are entitled to believe that his government of the new empire of the antipodes would not have proved unsuccessful. "Often," says Sir William, "he longed to govern Australia, then a mere receptacle for thieves, foreseeing that it might become a great state. When the vileness of the population was objected, he answered that Rome sprang from such a source, and it was an advantage, because benevolent despotism could be exercised without imputation of tyranny. His view was to raise a great community founded on sound monarchic principles, as a counterpoise in the world to the great advancing American republic." "I was mad," he says himself, many years after the offer had been made, "not to go out as governor of Australia. I could have founded a great kingdom, and by this time my whole plan would have been in full operation. Systematic education, abolition of primogeniture, the *Code Napoleon*. I would also have done my best to prevent the introduction of great manufactories, by promoting discussion on this simple question,—How can they tend to the strength, the freedom, the happiness of a nation? They produce corrupt morals, bad health, uncertain wages, and depend-

ence on a foreign market, instead of a strong and virtuous labouring class."

Whatever may be thought of the economic value of certain of these details, no one can deny that the scheme was in itself a great and most striking conception. Probably, however, it was as well that it was not acted on. Napier would have been too strong and iron-handed for the community. A young colony generally arrives most speedily at healthy life when it is allowed to work out union and form from within. When good government is imposed from without, however humane and sagacious the governor may be, the lawless freedom, the uncurbed activity, which are required to take possession of and subdue a new world, are weakened and paralysed. The present incoherent state of Australian politics, the sowing of the "wild oats" of its public life, contains perhaps the most confident assurance of the orderly future that is in store.

The day on which Napier reached the valley of the Indus he recognised its vast capabilities. He would bridle and subjugate the wild but noble river; make it the obedient handmaid of civilisation and commerce; tame it from its savage ways into order and decorum. On the ruins of the dynasty of the Ameers a new empire would arise, which, under the wise government of the English proconsul, should extend English

liberty and English enterprise across the deserts of Scinde and the mountains of Beloochistan. "Hyderabad should be made magnificent; yet Kurrachee should be my favourite. It should be made the mouth of the Indus, and that wild river should not stir from its bed without my leave; it should be chained like a malefactor; it should run close along the hills to Kurrachee, just giving me an elbow to Hyderabad."

Many statesmen, however, are very powerful on paper who fail lamentably in practice. Sir Charles Napier did not belong to the class. He made Scinde a strong and tranquil province, and the details of his government there are most instructive. But the Cephalonian Government exhibits as strikingly, though on a small scale, the peculiarities of his administrative talent. That beautiful island, when he arrived, was in a lamentable state of prostration and decrepitude, induced by habitual neglect, extravagant abuse, and wilful misgovernment. He made it healthy and prosperous. He encouraged agriculture and commerce; his roads scaled its almost inaccessible ravines, and opened to the mountain tribes a pathway for their commerce to the sea. He built wharves, harbours, lighthouses. His great public works are still the boast of the island. Travellers who visited Cephalonia when under his rule, could with difficulty trace in its crowd-

ed seaports, its active agriculture, its intelligent and equitable administration of justice, its well-ordered society, any fragments of the wretched wreck which he had found.

The genius and honesty of a single man accomplished the transformation. *Honesty,* I say emphatically; for Napier's Cephalonian administration is specially important, as showing the valuable results that a thoroughly honest man can achieve. He was a great and successful governor not only because he was an able man, but because —no fact comes out more clearly—he was an honest man. His conscience was as sound as his head. Let the administrative reformer lay this fact to heart. Unless in his scheme of reform he can devise some test to secure administrative integrity as well as administrative intelligence, he will quickly learn that his dream of a perfect government is not in a fair way to be realised.

The Cephalonian administration is important also as demonstrating how difficult it is to secure large results, even from an intelligent policy, without constant personal supervision. Nothing was too minute for Napier's eagle-eye. He matured his plan with clearness and decision, and then accompanied it, through all its ramifications, with the most unwearied vigilance. The whole force and earnestness of his character was directed upon the general plan, and upon the most sub-

ordinate detail. Thus he kept in union and order the hidden wheels, without which the machine, however well constructed, cannot move.

Our Radical politicians do not probably admire Napier's system of government. He loved liberty indeed; but he loved its substance—not its shadow. So he allowed himself to be fettered by abstract theories as little as by red-tape precedents. His government thus became a species of benevolent despotism; not a bad government for a decrepit society like Cephalonia, which needed the healthy stimulus of a masculine character like Napier's; not a bad government, when the despot can be relied on. "The only things," he says, "that bore me, are the Church and convent affairs; excepting, however, a beautiful nun of sixteen, who dislikes being one very much, and I have blowed up her old devil of an aunt, the abbess, for making her one. Nay, more: I told the girl's friend that if she would run away with a handsome young Greek, I would, as head of the Church, stand between her and all harm. My hope is she will do so, though my power, now martial law has ceased, is not quite so despotic as it was." We dare to say the beautiful nun and the "handsome young Greek" were not much afflicted by knowing that the "despot" exercised a somewhat arbitrary authority,—neither are we.

To do justice to Sir Charles Napier's merits as

a *soldier*, and to the various campaigns in which he was engaged, from Corunna to the Sutlej, would require a separate article, and does not lie within the scope of my present purpose. All that I am now concerned to show is, that imaginative power stamps his military as well as his civil career. He fought, as he wrote and governed—like a man of genius.

It was an accident that made young Napier a soldier; and he entertained a strong natural antipathy to the military profession. The strictness of its discipline was repugnant to the affluent sympathies of the man, to the liberal instincts of the citizen. And this great master of the art detested bloodshed. He was never at rest except in action; and yet, with his whole heart, he yearned for peace. "Peace, blessed Peace!" is his constant aspiration. When in command of the northern district of England, during the Chartist disturbances in 1840, he could not repress his bitter indignation at the rash levity with which the magistrates were disposed on all occasions to bring the people and the troops face to face; forgetting, as he said, that there was a civil authority between the two, and that the soldier should be appealed to only as an ultimate tribunal, when the police had been tried and failed. All war was hateful to him; but a servile war, a war of classes, would have been

misery. "Battle! Victory!" he exclaims, "Oh! spirit-stirring words in the bosom of society; but to me, O God, how my heart rejects them! That dreadful work of blood, sickening even to look on; no one feeling of joy or exaltation entered my head at Dubba or Meeanee: all was agony, I can use no better word. A longing never to have quitted Celbridge, to have passed my life in the round field, and the "devil's acre," and under the dear yew-trees on the terrace among the sparrows: these were the feelings which flashed in my head after the battles. But away with these feelings! let me go to work, let me sink in harness if so God pleases: he who flinches from work, in battle or out of it, is a coward." Noble old man!

Yet war was his true vocation. If ever any one was born for war, Charles Napier was the man. He studied its theory from boyhood. He followed Alexander from the Granicus to the Indus, and critically analysed the structure of his campaigns. He had meditated profoundly upon the large principles and strategic laws of war before he was required to put them in practice. The maxims which he evolved in the study were the principles which he afterwards illustrated in the field. And in this, as in everything else—but in this pre-eminently—he went at once, with direct decisive insight, to the root of the matter.

To the professional student his disquisitions on strategy must prove invaluable: even to the general reader—the laws which regulate a military campaign being not remotely derived from those which rule the still larger campaign of life—they are full of interest. "A commander should concentrate his own forces, divide his enemies, and never think himself strong enough when he can be stronger. Yet he should remember that additional numbers do not always give strength. Always attack if you cannot avoid an action. If your enemy is strongest, fall on his weakest points, and avoid his strong ones. If you are more powerful, fasten on his vitals, and destroy him. If he is strong, provoke him to separate; if he is weak, drive him into a corner." These maxims were penned many years before he went to the East: his Scindian campaign was their application.

Another fact illustrates this natural aptitude for the military profession. His enthusiastic love for natural beauty is very noticeable; and many of his descriptions of scenery are admirable: "The vast precipices above and below, the overhanging rocks of stupendous magnitude, the wild savage appearance of nature, mingled with all that is beautiful, so far as wood, water, rocks, clouds, snow, ice, rainbows, storms, in all their variety, can make beauty. . . . The Tyrol

has another kind of beauty. There the road winds north and south, and the sun at noonday throws such strong lights and shadows as I never saw equalled; one mountain is black as jet, and just beyond it out starts a vast jutting mass of granite, many thousand feet high, covered with mosses, brushwood, pines, coloured earth and slabs, all as brilliant as diamonds under a strong sun. . . . Those gems of bright waters in their rude mountain setting, bursting on one's sight in fresh changing forms, with all their lights and shadows, their mists and showers, exhilarate the spirits, and give a calmness and happiness to the aching mind which seems like the peace of heaven still lingering on earth, though driven from the usual haunts of men." He had thus a fine eye for the picturesque in a country; but after a deep-drawn breath of admiration, he turned instinctively to its military character. The pass is not only grand and striking; it is the place where a handful might resist a host. The plain is not merely a fertile and richly-wooded amphitheatre; it is the field which opposing armies select for battle. It is very interesting in this light to accompany him to Greece, and follow him step by step from one Hellenic battle-field to another. A singular spectacle! The science of the new world testing, by reference to the unchangeable facts of nature, the prudence

the heroism, and the capacity of the old. It is indeed no common treat to be present while one of Wellington's captains estimates, from the modern soldier's point of view, the military capabilities of Marathon and Thermopylæ.

We say that, as a soldier, Napier was a man of genius, and his military acts are *poetic*,—masterly as a thorough soldier's, and yet imaginative. Very good generals there have been, steady, prosaic, commonplace men, who have done their work prudently and effectively; but the great captains, Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Napoleon, Wellington, Napier, were made of different stuff. One or two incidents from the career of the latter will illustrate this brilliant originality.

In 1818 we were at war with America: a war which we conducted by making desultory descents upon the eastern seaboard,—sacking a village here, burning a homestead there. Out of this petty contention, Napier's plan of war rises large and portentous. He asked to be landed on the coast of Carolina with a single regiment of English soldiers. At its head he undertook in six months to raise the whole slave population; and, in the shape of the Southern States, exact a "material guarantee" which might bring the Republic to reason. His information led him to believe that his scheme was feasible, and we hesitate to say that it was not. Considering the

condition of society, the imperfect communication, and the great extent of waste land, depopulated, or peopled only by the slave-owner and his hostile dependants, in these States,—this, in any defensive war, is evidently even to-day the weak point of the Republic. The free activities of the North oppose to foreign aggression an impenetrable front; can as much be confidently predicted of the hollow and decayed societies of the South?

The general conception of the first Scindian campaign was masterly. Napier, indeed, underrated the prowess of the Beloochee chivalry; but this was an error that only experience could rectify, and it was an error, besides, which has secured him imperishable fame; for had he been undeceived in time, the splendid spectacle of a handful of English troopers rushing at Meeanee and Dubba upon twenty times their own number of fierce, well-trained, and courageous warriors, would never have been witnessed. But in every other respect the strategy was consummate. The situation was difficult. The time was limited. The hot months were approaching, and before they arrived the campaign must be won. Napier was therefore obliged to bring his quarrel with the Ameers to an immediate issue. But it was in their power to scatter their retainers without coming to an actual engagement; make

for the Eastern desert on the one hand, or, crossing the Indus on the other, gain the mountains of Beloochistan; and then reunite and attack his little force when the heat had set in, and it was impossible for Europeans to keep the field. All these possibilities he foiled. He destroyed their desert retreat; he cut them off from the river; and before the ramparts of Hyderabad, their capital, and the only place where—it had struck him from the first—he could with any certainty bring this Arab-like race to bay, he fought the battle of Meeanee.

But the most striking and original incident in the campaign, and the one which most rivets and fascinates the imagination, is the march upon the desert sanctuary of Emaun Ghur. Along the eastern border of Scinde lies a barren desert—Regeestan, or the Land of Sand, the natives call it. According to the notion they entertained before Napier came, the desert presented an impenetrable barrier to European troops, who could not live among its thirsty and barren steppes. Consequently, whenever they wished to evade an engagement or baffle a foe, the Arab race struck their tents and disappeared amid the dust of the wilderness. Emaun Ghur—the stronghold of the northern, as Omercote was of the southern Ameers—lay one hundred miles from the fertile Indus valley, in the heart of this desert; and so

long as the princes could retreat with impunity to their lion-like lair, Napier felt that it was impossible to attack them with success. He determined to destroy this security, and with it the *prestige* of the desert; prove to his foes that there was no mountain however rugged, no desert however inhospitable, where the English soldier could not track them out. He keenly appreciated, indeed, the danger of a military march across the wilderness; amid its waves of loose sand, which a breath of wind could stir into swift and terrible hostility; where there was neither food for his camels nor water for his men. "I am fully aware of the danger of these marches into the desert," he says, "but the thing may be done; what one man does, another may do. I ought to have quiet thoughts," he goes on, "and cannot; for I am throwing myself into a desert, and must not think of John" (his nephew, who had been wounded), "or I may involve all under me in disaster and disgrace. This is a hard trial for an old man of sixty: it shakes me to the foundation. Yet what signifies these troubles? I feel a spring in me that defies all difficulties. The time of life is short, but to spend that shortness vainly 'twere too long. This thought must urge me to resolution, and resolution is half the battle." So, mounting on camels a hundred of his troopers, he cast himself boldly upon the wil-

derness; and after a three days' march amid waste sandhills skirted with the scanty desert vegetation, and clothed with loose sea-shells, "mussels, cockles, and the spiral unicorn," *débris* of some primeval flood, he reached the great fortress, which he found evacuated, and which he utterly destroyed. It was a perilous and intrepid exploit; his biographer compares it with Marius's descent on Jugurtha's town of Capsa: to ourselves, in its silence and rapidity it recalls Montrose's winter march across the Grampians to the country of Argyle. In either case the effect was decisive: the sense of confident security was destroyed.

Montrose—Napier's most renowned ancestor—was the last of the courtly Cavaliers. Yet his descendant contrived to preserve in *his* wars a dash of the antique chivalry. The Plutarchian hero, however, and not the fine gentleman of the *beau monde*, was the model after which he had been cast; and his wilful humour, his rugged eccentricity, his impracticable honesty, prevented the society to which he belonged from recognising the essentially chivalrous nobleness of his disposition. In no respect was this more conspicuously manifested than in the estimate it induced him to form of his military opponents. He acknowledged with enthusiasm the imperial genius of Napoleon, and bitterly resented the

shame of his captivity. During the Scindian war, he invariably restored their swords to the beaten chieftains; and he rendered generous justice to the soldierly qualities of the "Lion,"—the noblest and most warlike of his warlike race. He delighted to recognise and reward deeds of genuine valour, by whomsoever performed. "At Dubba, also, as at Meeanee," he exclaims, "a leader, the same at both, and worthy of all praise, animated the fight—Hoche Mohamed Seedee, an Abyssinian slave! Heroic in strength of body and mind, this brave man and his brother slaves, who formed the domestic guard of the Ameers, forced their dastard lords to fight at Meeanee; then, having vainly opposed their final surrender, sought the Lion; and at Dubba, fighting with unbounded fury, fell to the last man under the bayonets of the 22d Regiment." There is in these words the generous glow, the eloquent enthusiasm of the born gentleman, who detects the hero in the slave.

Sir Charles's career was peculiar in many ways—most peculiar perhaps in this, that it began when the majority of those who started along with him were in their graves. He was past sixty before he held any great command. When sent to Scinde he was an old man. "It will be sorrowful," he says on that occasion, "to leave you all, for it is late in life, and I am much worn.

I am now past fifty-nine, and for this command should be thirty-nine. Oh for forty, as at Cephalonia, where I laughed at eighteen hours' hard work on foot, under a burning sun! now, at sixty, how far will my carcass carry me?—no great distance; well, to try is glorious." This feeling in his later years often came uppermost—how much he had to do, and how short the time in which to do it. It oppressed him to know that he was sixty—an old man, with a great empire to conquer and consolidate. Remembering the things he did, and the memorable name he secured, after the elastic vigour of manhood was departed,—what would he not have achieved had he been earlier intrusted with the conduct of great affairs?

In this resolute spirit did the old man toil on till his death,—honourably, intelligently, conscientiously. Such an example invests mature life with a finer charm than commonly attaches to it. Disguise it as we may, the grey hairs to which we hasten are too often a crown, not of glory, but of sorrow and scorn. The great lawyer, the great general, and the great poet, sink into dotage and decay. They may bequeath great names and great books; but what do these avail them? To the man who feels how infinitely more valuable a complete *life* is than even the best and completest of deeds and writings, this

phenomenon of mental destruction,—the crash of the system,—must remain a perplexing problem. Is this the end of all?—"the blackness of thick darkness,"—or, at best, childishness, weakness, oblivion? Very other was the old age of Napier. He fought great battles, governed great provinces, achieved a great name, long after that period had passed when, according to an antique morality not quite exploded, it behoves men to lay aside the things of the present life, and to prepare their "souls" for the next. Sir Charles, who knew of no special preparation for the other world better than doing his work well in this—and that kind of religion he had practised all his life—worked on early and late, in season and out of season, till the day of his death. His eye was not dimmed, nor his natural force abated. But at length the battered body could not keep pace any longer with the keen, undaunted, untiring spirit,—

> "The fiery soul, which, working out its way,
> Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
> And o'er-informed the tenement of clay."

So the campaign has ended, and the veteran, after his hard work, rests well,—*ubi saeva indignatio cor ulterius lacerare nequit.* Yet the epithet is inappropriate,—it is difficult to imagine a Napier taking his rest even in the grave. For that inquisitive and ardent spirit there must be

other, nobler work to do — *elsewhere.* If he sleep, he sleeps lightly,—ready to awake at the first breath of morning,—like Heine's grenadier, with his bare sword at his side :—

> "So will ich liegen und horchen still,
> Wie eine Schildwach' im Grabe,
> Bis einst ich höre Kanonen Gebrüll
> Und wiehernder Rosse Getrabe :
> Dann reitet mein Kaiser wohl über mein Grab,
> Viel Schwerter klirren und blitzen ;
> Dann steig' ich gewaffnet hervor aus dem Grab,
> Den Kaiser, den Kaiser zu schützen."

ROBERT LEE

"Then went the jury out, whose names were Mr Blindman, Mr No-Good, Mr Malice, Mr Love Lust, Mr Heady, Mr High Mind, Mr Enmity, Mr Liar, Mr Cruelty, Mr Hate Light, Mr Implacable, who every one gave in his private verdict against him among themselves, and afterwards unanimously concluded to bring him in guilty before the judge. And first among them Mr Blindman, the foreman, said, 'I see clearly that this man is a heretic.' Then said Mr No-Good, 'Away with such a fellow from the earth!' 'Ay,' said Mr Malice, 'for I hate the very look of him.' Then said Mr Love Lust, 'I could never endure him.' 'Nor I,' said Mr Live Loose, 'for he was always condemning my way.' 'Hang him, hang him,' said Mr Heady. 'A sorry scrub,' said Mr High Mind. 'My heart riseth against him,' said Mr Enmity. 'He is a rogue,' said Mr Liar. 'Hanging is too good for him,' said Mr Cruelty. 'Let us despatch him out of the way,' said Mr Hate Light. Then said Mr Implacable, 'Might I have all the world given me, I could not be reconciled to him; therefore let us forthwith bring him in guilty of death.'"

—JOHN BUNYAN: *The Pilgrim's Progress.*

ROBERT LEE.

"But there is also a deeper work, which is not dependent on the opinions of men, in which many elements combine, some alien to religion, or accidentally at variance with it. That work can hardly expect to win much popular favour, so far as it runs counter to the feelings of religious parties. But he who bears a part in it may feel a confidence, which no popular caresses or religious sympathy could inspire, that he has, by a divine help, been enabled to plant his foot somewhere beyond the waves of time. He may depart hence before the natural term, worn out with intellectual toil; regarded with suspicion by many of his contemporaries; yet not without a sure hope that the love of truth which men of saintly lives often seem to slight is nevertheless accepted before God."

ROBERT LEE, Minister of the Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh, Professor of Biblical Criticism in its University, and one of the most eminent Scotchmen of our generation, was born at Tweedmouth, a border village on the sea-coast opposite Berwick, on the 11th of November 1804. Of his early life we know almost nothing: of the worthy people among whom he was bred, he, returning in 1841 or 1842, has left these graphic and picturesque notices :—

"Sunday the 8th.—Assisted to-day at the dispensation of the Sacrament in Tweedmouth Chapel. The chapel was full

of people, with many of whose faces I had been familiar even from childhood. Time had sadly blanched the heads of most of them, and the boys and girls had all grown into staid men and women—*douce* papas and mammas; which changes are very affecting and melancholy, though instructive withal. Verily good, worthy, religious people, many of these Tweedmouthites. A great crowd of them going to heaven, I verily believe, less corrupted than most populations in these wicked times of the world. We have been observing those people with both our eyes since we came among them, and we are not a little interested in their peculiarities. First, their dialect is most amazing and unique! unlike anything to be heard within the bounds of the solar system; and then the people seem a lively, vivacious, and somewhat quaint race of mortals, evidently not disposed to die of grief, having, it seems to us, a good dash of the Irish in their composition, and a different sort of animal from Sawney altogether. We often peep into their cottages too. Green paint is in great request outside, and brisk chat within. A cleanly, tidy race. No Chartism here, but much church-going, though no church, or as good as none. On the whole, our impressions are very favourable. It would be a good region this if it were planted with trees." *

From Tweedmouth he went to the Berwick Grammar School, and from the Berwick Grammar School to the University of St Andrews. St Andrews was in those days a truly academic city, —a dark, sombre, ruinous, ill-lighted, badly-paved, old-fashioned, old-mannered, secluded place.

* The extracts in this paper are taken from the valuable memoir prepared by Dr Story —*Life and Remains of Robert Lee, D.D., by R. H. Story of Rosneath*: 2 vols. 1869.

Then came the era of Sir Hugh Playfair, who destroyed its scholastic repose, and wiped away its classic dust. But in those primitive ages a few noble fragments of ancient ruin, which had resisted the fury of the Puritan iconoclasts,—the massive walls of a feudal castle, the great tower of St Rule, the lovely windows and arches of the cathedral,—rose above an old-fashioned street, not inconveniently crowded with old-fashioned houses, in which old-fashioned professors and old-fashioned ladies looked after keen-eyed threadbare students, who here, in red and ragged gowns, like the early Edinburgh Reviewers, cultivated the Muses upon a little oatmeal. Very cheerful and homely was the life thus led,—a life through which the shrill sea-wind blew healthfully, and to which the daily round of "golf" on the Links, and the evening rubber of long whist in the parlour, added the keen zest of physical and intellectual excitement. Death has swept them all clean away,—wonderful old Scotch ladies, wonderful old Scotch professors; and new streets, new terraces, new men, and new manners have transformed modern St Andrews—during the summer months at least—into a fashionable watering-place for the lawyers of Edinburgh and the traders of Dundee. But go to it during winter or early spring, before the College session is over, before the students in their red gowns have

deserted the streets, before the sociable academic society has taken flight, before the Links are crowded by neophytes who cannot handle a club, before the wild east wind has abated, before the hoarse complaints of a sea often vexed by storm are silenced, before the snow has melted away from the distant Grampian range, and you may even to-day understand the bleak charm that thirty, or forty, or fifty years ago endeared this sea-girt seat of early learning and piety—this severe mother of the intellectual Graces, *Mater sæva Cupidinum*—to the most apathetic of her sons.

At St Andrews the young student's academic career was brilliant. "Not for many years," Principal Haldane testifies, "has this university sent forth a more distinguished student." From St Andrews he went to Arbroath, where he became the youthful popular preacher (with just the faintest tinge of dandyism in his manner, I have heard) in an unendowed chapel, where he remained until, in 1835, he was translated to Campsie, a parish lying upon the borders of the Lennox, that richly-wooded and fruitful lowland valley which serves as an approach to the lakes and mountains of the west. He devoted himself while there mainly to evangelical work, though the great Non-Intrusion controversy grew gradually louder as he lingered among hills and glens

to which nature has been prodigal of gifts. This Non-Intrusion debate was a matter always more or less distasteful to Mr Lee. Had it been possible, at a time when the Scotch clergy and laity were divided into two hostile camps, he would willingly have steered a middle course. He did not love the immoderately Moderate party of which Dr Muir and Dr Cook were the leaders. He was prepared to welcome a change of the law which would have made patronage, under certain restrictions, a popular right. But when the leaders of the Anti-Patronage party proclaimed that their construction of the law was the sound one, and the only sound one; when they insisted in denouncing and defying the judges of the land, who declared the law to be something quite different; when they excommunicated and deposed those of their number who ventured to obey the law as it had been authoritatively laid down; when they raised a mere question of legal title into a question of divine enactment; when they affirmed that the Lord Jesus had been crucified afresh because Lord Kinnoul had presented Mr John Young to the parish of Auchterarder,—then Mr Lee found no difficulty in making up his mind. He repudiated the outrageous pretensions of the priesthood. "If the clergy," he said, "could make and unmake laws at their good pleasure, any true liberty

in the National Church was impossible." All this nowadays seems so manifest to us that it is difficult for those unacquainted with the religious history of Scotland to imagine how a threadbare ecclesiastical debate could have evoked such passionate indignation, and such an ardour of defiance. Lay-patronage may or may not be an evil element in a State Church; but it should be recollected that only one question was really at issue during the supreme crisis of the conflict. The Non-Intrusion party left the Establishment because they were prevented by the law courts from breaking the law of the Church. They were probably well advised to leave. The error which they made for many years was an error identical with that which the Bishop of Capetown has made more recently,—they insisted on breaking the law, and yet remaining in the Church established by law.

Mr Lee's recorded words during this Disruption crisis are worthy of careful study. Amid its windy declamation they seem to be almost the only words of truth and soberness then uttered, or on which it is possible to look back with satisfaction. The "breadth" of the views which he entertained, and the prophetic sagacity with which he anticipated the prospects of a Church from which the more fanatical elements should have been removed, are strikingly exem-

plified in a letter which he addressed to one of the leaders of the movement :—

"I do not apprehend that matters are destined at present to come to an extremity. The Government doubtless will pass a law next session. Whether it comprehends what is now held to be non-intrusion or not, I have not the least doubt that a very large proportion of the 550 you mention will find it makes such concessions as will enable them with tolerable consistency to remain in the Church. A few perhaps may not submit; but as to the Church as a Church breaking off her connection with the State, it seems to me a strange imagination, which, notwithstanding all you say, I cannot persuade myself is likely soon to be realised. I may be wrong, I am not in the middle of the strife, and various causes hinder me from feeling that deep interest in it which others feel. If it is the will of God that the Church of Scotland should now be overturned, I doubt not that God has purposes to answer which none of the instruments have in view, and that another Church will succeed it, founded on more comprehensive and catholic principles, of a less sectarian character and spirit, and better adapted to the present state of society and the wants of men. These defects in our Church are becoming more and more apparent; they are felt by many of the best ministers in the Church, and by more of the people, and they will prove fatal to the Church of Scotland at no distant day. I am thankful for this controversy, in that it has tended to inspire this feeling in many quarters and to deepen it. The discussions about spiritual independence have to many men who have not yet avowed it suggested that the Church of God has sinned in binding herself to relinquish her liberty to interpret the Word of God otherwise than as God Himself shall give light; and that to cause her ministers to swear that they will never hold or teach otherwise than as they may believe when they swear, is to tempt them to swear that they will refuse any new instruction which God may give them; that they will

be obstinately blind, and that the Church shall, century after century, refuse to become wiser or to understand the Word of God better than she did at a given period. And it excites my wonder that a Church can talk of spiritual independence in a trifle and deem it essential, when she has relinquished her independence in that capital and essential affair of the interpretation of the Word of God itself." *

* The law of patronage was ultimately abolished in 1874, after a vehement protest from Mr Gladstone. "No," the ex-Premier is reported to have said, addressing the clergy of the Established Church—"if you ask me to aid you in doing away with patronage, you must admit at the outset that the Free Church were right, and that you were wrong, in 1843. If this be so, the clergy of that Church must represent the true Church of Scotland, and it becomes your duty to surrender your endowments in their favour." Had Dr Lee been a member of the House, he might possibly have replied: "There is a constitutional mode by which any abuse, secular or ecclesiastical, may be redressed. I have adopted that mode, and I ask the Legislature to annul the statute which created the abuse of which I complain. In doing so I do not surely admit that those who declared that no statute existed, and who insisted on breaking it, occupy the same position as we occupy who simply ask you to repeal it. They were rebels; we are reformers."

It cannot be too often repeated that the real question at issue during the Disruption controversy was simply,—Assuming that the Church and the State have entered into a contract, by which certain privileges are given to the Church, and certain rights are reserved by the State, and that a dispute arises as to the meaning of a provision of the document,—what tribunal is to construe the contract, and determine the rights of parties? The construction of other contracts is assigned to the courts of law, and there does not appear to be any particular reason why this particular contract should form an exception to the general rule, unless it be maintained, as some Presbyterian ultramontanes do indeed maintain, that, whenever it is so inclined, the Church commissioned by God has authority to supersede the courts established by man. A similar claim was preferred by the Church soon after the Reformation with regard to

The Campsie flock (upon whom Non-Intrusion principles made little impression) were loath to part with their minister, a great mutual respect and appreciation existing between pastor and people; but 1843, the year of the Disruption, arrived, and Mr Lee was taken to Edinburgh to fill the vacancy in the Greyfriars Church,—one

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divorce,—the clergy holding that the dissolution of marriage was a spiritual act which could only be validly performed by a spiritual court. But this pretension was, as Riddel says (i. 431), "shortly and decisively quashed by the legal civil authority,"—an invasion of what is vaguely and loftily termed the headship of Christ, which *our* Free Churchmen, who hold that the law courts are incompetent to decide what is or is not a spiritual act, would have keenly resented.

It is unnecessary to justify all the decisions given by the Court of Session during the protracted controversy which led to the Disruption. But even the most high-handed of its orders was to a certain extent forced upon it by the tyrannical violence of the Non-Intrusion party. After the Court had declared what the law was, its protection was invoked by a minority of the ministers and office-bearers of the Church who were desirous to obey the law, and who were prevented from obeying the law by a majority of their number who had resolved to disobey it. It must be admitted that the Court was placed in a position of extreme difficulty, and that if any mistakes were committed by it, the blame must rest primarily with those who, refusing to withdraw from the Church, would yet neither obey the law themselves nor allow others to obey it.

I am disposed to think that the very best thing, in a literary point of view, produced by the Disruption controversy, was a ballad by Professor Aytoun, which was hawked at the time about the streets of Edinburgh as a broad-sheet, entitled *The Elder's Warning.* It is one of the most vigorous of his poems, and should be preserved in any future edition of the Lays or the Ballads. In the meantime the reader will find it in the Appendix to this volume.

of many vacancies in Edinburgh churches caused by the great secession.

When, in 1843, Mr Lee was translated to Edinburgh, the grey metropolis of the North was still a centre of intellectual force. The men who had fought so fiercely against each other in the pages of *Blackwood* and the *Edinburgh Review* had by this time indeed beaten their swords into more peaceful implements, and in learned judge and grave professor it was difficult to recognise the features of Francis Jeffrey and Christopher North. The wild riot of the earlier part of the century was quelled. But the society in which Jeffrey, Cockburn, Murray, Wilson, Chalmers, Hamilton, Combe, Rutherfurd, and many others met together, could not have been other than brilliant; and in this society,—in the Whig part of it, at least,—the new minister of Greyfriars—full of swift, keen, subtle, sprightly life—soon grew to be a noticeable figure. Among his intimates of a later date were Mr Russel of *The Scotsman* (to whose columns Dr Lee frequently contributed); Mr Hill Burton, the most animated and picturesque of Scotch historians; and Sir Noel Paton, the most brilliant and romantic of Scotch artists.

Although Jeffrey, Rutherfurd, and the first Lord Moncreiff had a strong theoretic admiration for the Free Kirk (so long as they were not re-

quired to attend its ministrations), the aristocracy of the Scotch Bar (unlike the old thieving lairds) have never been "addicted to religion." Yet the air of Edinburgh is generally bitter with Calvinism, and in 1843 it was particularly inclement. The Free Kirk, having just made a heroic sacrifice, were naturally rather out of temper. Cakes and ale, consequently, were quite at a discount. The re-enactment of the old sumptuary laws of the Puritans began to be talked of again. The national beverage was interdicted. Young professors could not be permitted to indulge in promiscuous dancing. The Presbytery thundered hoarsely against the profanation of the Sabbath, as practised on Leith Pier or round Arthur's Seat. The slightest sign of independent vitality, intellectual or religious, was sourly repressed by a party in which the secular intolerance of the democracy was curiously combined with the spiritual pretensions of the hierarchy.

Against this spirit in its different forms—democratic excitement, Puritanic rigour, Calvinistic dogma—Dr Lee, both as Minister of Greyfriars, and as Professor of Biblical Criticism in the University (he was appointed to the chair in 1846), waged a constant war, and it is this warfare which gives to the last twenty or thirty years of his life an almost poetic unity and com-

pleteness. So far as I can gather from his biography, Robert Lee when he entered the Church had not studied very closely its theoretic or speculative side. He was a soldier in the Church militant—not a doctor, not a philosopher; and he looked at visionaries and dreamers with a somewhat scornful eye. But as he lived on, there gradually grew upon him the conviction that there was something greater than good works. The severe majesty of TRUTH surprised him at his evangelistic labours, as she has surprised so many of the finest natures. Truth, simple, absolute, unconditioned, was to be thenceforth the sole mistress whom he served. He had to emancipate his own mind, he had to emancipate the minds of the clergy and laity around him, from whatever restraints, devised by ignorance, error, or superstition, prevented him and them from attaining the truth. A perilous service! For such service how was he armed—what were his moral and intellectual qualifications?

Though he delighted in the intellectual excitement of conflict, Dr Lee was not naturally a combative man. He kept away from the Church courts as long as he decently could. But circumstances were too strong for him, and he was forced latterly to occupy a prominent position in the controversial arena. There can be no doubt, however, that he liked public speaking, and that

he found his true vocation in debate. He had the temperament of the orator,—the presence of an audience raised and stimulated his faculties. Having heard most of the great speakers of the present day, my impression is that he was hardly excelled by any of them. He was not a very ready or flexible writer; he did not work freely pen in hand. Even when he prepared a speech he was not at his best (during preparation some of the sparkle and brilliancy seeming to evaporate); it was in instant, incisive reply that he shone. At such times his mind worked with amazing readiness and rapidity; his wit was bright, his logic keen, his language pure and nervous. Most men make their best hits when the opportunity has passed, when they have had leisure to frame the crushing sarcasm or to polish the telling repartee; whereas Dr Lee was able to single out the weak point in the enemy's argument in an instantaneous, instinctive sort of way. Other men lose their heads entirely when they find themselves in presence of hostile listeners; but Dr Lee's faculties were all in finest working order when with a few brief notes before him, hastily scribbled on the back of a letter, he rose to reply to the arguments of a triumphant majority. This logical rapidity was probably connected with his delicate sensitiveness. Any blunder or blemish in an argument *jarred* upon

him,—grated against some fine, critical nerve in his nature which (so far as its owner's comfort was involved) had been left rather too much exposed to the keen air.

Yet, ardent and sensitive as Dr Lee's nature was, he displayed in public great intellectual coolness and resource. He held himself well in hand. The ineffable contempt which he entertained for many of his adversaries may have partly accounted for his composure, yet it implied something more than scorn. The truth is that, though his temper was sanguine, his intellect was sedate, contemplative, speculative. The winds and the waves of controversy could not reach the innermost sanctuary of his soul.

The language in which his speeches were composed was eminently felicitous. His command of words was inexhaustible, yet in their use he was dainty and fastidious, and if not satisfied with the sentence as originally turned, he did not hesitate (as his hearers must recollect) to repeat it in a form more to his mind. The written words of such a man—diaries, sermons, letters, even reported speeches—must of course very imperfectly represent him. His influence was in a great degree personal, and incapable of being transmitted to those at a distance. He was a really witty speaker; but his wit vanishes in the reports. The most impressive passages in his

sermons (which were never violent nor rhetorical) were the unwritten passages.

Dr Lee was sympathetic and catholic in most of his tastes; yet at times he manifested a marked impatience of discussion which did not directly interest him. He did not care much for works of imagination or humour: though brilliantly witty himself, he loved grave books; light amusing literature rather teased him. "I will confess further," he says in his diary, "that my patience wears much better upon dull and dry authors than upon such as are professedly written to amuse. With Chillingworth, or Butler, or Hooker, I really proceed with a respectable pertinacity; but *Hudibras* foiled me in two readings. I think it possible I may peruse the most important questions in the *Summa Theologiæ;* but I feel a strong prophetic impression that my patience will never carry me through *Tristram Shandy.*" And a little later on he gives the key to this feeling, I think, when he observes,—"I am ever more convinced of the soundness of Aristotle's maxim, that the only subjects worthy of the serious consideration of a rational being are politics and religion: all else is secondary." Politics and religion!—whatever lay outside these high, serious objects of thought failed to attract him, whereas the dullest treatise on government could be keenly relished.

Dr Lee, it is almost needless to add, was animated by a most intrepid spirit. Of him it may be truly said that he never feared the face of man. He was often left quite alone; but his courage never deserted him. He never quailed. What he deemed to be truth (more especially if unpopular truth) needed to be proclaimed at any cost! Yet he was a politic man,—so politic, indeed, that he was sometimes accused of concealment and unworthy *finesse*. The accusation rests on a misunderstanding of his character. He was a leader, not a demagogue. He preferred the art of the statesman to the passion of the fanatic. Ill-regulated enthusiasm was repugnant to his tolerant and reasonable nature. Moderation—the right balance of all the faculties—was what he mainly aimed at.

But over and above his fairness, reasonableness, moderation, Dr Lee had great serious qualities of heart and intellect. The notion that he was at best only a sharp, supple, adroit ecclesiastical politician is an essentially false one. It used to be said by his enemies that he was flippant, that he was irreverent, that he spoke of the mysteries of religion without due respect. He was irreverent, no doubt, of the mere accidents of religion. But in a high sense no man was ever more truly devout,—no man, that is, ever realised more vividly the dependence of this outward

visible life on an unseen spiritual life. He never pretended, indeed, that he had reached a state of ecstatic conviction. The present was very mysterious, the future was very dark, all explanations were more or less tentative. He looked forward to being reunited with the children who had been taken from him, but it was scarcely with joyful hope. His mind was too intensely critical not to appreciate all the immense perplexities of the Hereafter. He trusted that he and those who had been dear to him might meet again; he prayed to God almost passionately that he might see them face to face in the kingdom of heaven. But that kingdom was very far off—was a distant abstraction; death, the open grave, the closed eyes and the folded hands of those whom he had loved with a gay and chivalrous devotion, were tremendous realities. Such a mind so tried might have sunk into absolute unbelief but for one unconquerable conviction,—there was a righteous King and Father in heaven. The Fatherhood of God was to him the anchor of faith, and he realised the relation with singular and uncommon distinctness. Dr Lee's biographer has published a good many extracts from his private diaries, interesting in many ways—most interesting, perhaps, as manifesting in an altogether irrefutable way the intensely devotional habit of his mind. Day by day, and night after night, there is

habitual, simple, unaffected appeal to God his Father. He confesses himself, lays bare his whole soul, his sins and shortcomings, his hopes and sorrows, to his Maker. Many of his hearers must recollect the unwritten passages in his sermons, when, quitting the paper that lay before him, he would break forth into noble and unpremeditated eloquence. They must have felt at such times that this was a man who could rise, who *had* risen, into intimate communion with the unseen spiritual world, and who knew as a fact that his life was upheld and guided by a just, merciful, and righteous Being.

Dr Lee's domestic life was eminently engaging. All the rich genial activities of an elastic nature were constantly enjoyed by his family and friends. A charming youthfulness of feeling was one of his most winning characteristics. To the end he was full of life and buoyant vitality—so full that it was difficult to realise that he was growing old —and he continued to anticipate his summer holiday with more than boyish zest and glee. In his home circle he was bright and gay and eager ; the combative aspect of his character was there unknown, except in the form of genial fun or witty paradox. He had a great faculty of attaching people to him, from the youngest to the oldest, from the highest in the land to the humblest. He delighted in children, and they delighted in

him. The little sketch of his relations with the venerable Miss Napier of Merchiston, is one of the most pleasing which his biographer reproduces. For the old doorkeeper of the Greyfriars Church his pastor had always ready a kindly and cheerful word of recognition. The frail old man seemed sadly shaken when, on that bleak Sunday forenoon in March, he brought me the news that Dr Lee was dead ; and next day, or the day thereafter, I heard that he himself was dead,—dying verily of a broken heart, as I can believe.

The domestic circle, indeed, was often invaded: death deprived him within a few years of most of those whom he loved best. Yet there was an irrepressible spring in his nature. He bent his head and wept over many a grave the tears which come from men who are at once strong and tender. Yet he was never quite unmanned. He quickly put his grief aside in some silent, secret, sacred corner of his heart, and returned with what seemed the old vigorous alacrity to the conflict which was to end only with life. But though we did not know it then, we know now that those multiplied bereavements (combined with public discouragements) were secretly undermining his constitution, slowly but surely draining the fountain of life.

Many of the sad entries in his diaries are very touching; a few of these may be inserted here,

before going on to consider what, in point of fact, Dr Lee did or tried to do :—

"*June* 21, 1856.—Our twentieth wedding-day. Goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our life. We are all alive and in health, and all in peace and love. How great mercies are these! Bless the Lord, O my soul.

"Our children are rising; some of them have risen up like olive-plants around our table. God keep them from all evil, and prosper them in all good things."

"*August* 3*d*, 12 P.M.—Our darling Janie, now more dear than ever, and more lovely and attractive, is sinking rapidly; and our hearts are torn with grief and pity. My heart by turns is submissive and rebellious; sometimes I believe, sometimes doubt all things.

"O my God, I will hope in Thee for my child and myself; yea, and for all Thy children, for we have all one Father."

"*August* 19*th*, 1858.—This evening, at 9.30, our dear Janie ceased from her sorrows, and was delivered from all her pains. I feel as if I had never before known grief. The same morning she took leave of us with words and looks that can never be forgotten by those who witnessed them. Her hope was that God would permit her to be a ministering spirit to comfort her parents, and to console her brother in his distant pilgrimage. Her beautiful countenance grew more and more beautiful as her strength decayed; and to the last her words bore the stamp of that original, witty, powerful, and beautiful mind which distinguished her even from a child. She lived in an atmosphere of beauty; she found it in everything, or put it there. She neither did nor said anything in a commonplace way; all was fresh, original, picturesque, and joyous."

On the same night he wrote in another notebook :—

"If you pray that all men may be brought to the knowledge and obedience of the truth, why may not Mr —— implore God to look in mercy upon his dead daughter, to keep her in His holy keeping, to make her partaker of the joys of Paradise, to shorten any correction she may need, and to hasten her perfect felicity? God (I trust) will forgive, if He does not answer, such prayers."

"13*th.*—Dearest George died—11 A.M. *My only son.* Another blow—if possible, the heaviest of all. I am not worthy to have had such a son, so amiable, gentle, humble, meek, and patient. He was *poor in spirit,* which, though not conducive to success and advancement in this rude world, has the 'kingdom of heaven' promised to it. O God, may he and his dear sisters have rest and peace in the bosom of their Lord—and partake for ever of Thy heavenly kingdom. And as for me, Lord have mercy upon me. Deliver me in good time from all my sins and miseries, through Christ our Lord. Amen."

"*Nov.* 11, 1863.—My birthday and that of our dearest Bella, who was born to immortal life this day at 3 P.M."

"*Nov.* 16.—Funeral of dearest Bella. Requiescat in pace in Domini sinu. Donec resurrexerint justi et justæ omnes. O Deus, miserere."

This is the last entry during that sad year :—

"*Dec.* 31, 1863.—To-night I am alone, my wife and daughter being at Paisley. Alas! how our lives sink down into dust and rottenness! This once populous house is almost empty, and the grave has wellnigh swallowed up its living and loving and beautiful inhabitants. O Thou living God, may they and we live with Thee, united to part no more, in Thy kingdom of heaven, where we shall praise Thee as the Father of Thy Christ, the Conqueror of Death, and the first-fruits of them that sleep. May our fearful and troubled spirits at length find rest in Thee, O God."

So much for the man. Let us see now some-

thing of the actual amount of work which he overtook in this world before he was laid aside.

During the five-and-twenty years that Dr Lee was a member of the Presbytery of Edinburgh he had to deal with many large public questions; several of them questions of national importance, others affecting exclusively the internal economy of the Church to which he belonged. In the former category may be classed such topics as religious tests in the universities, the running of railway trains on Sunday, and the merits and demerits of a purely secular system of national education. During many years he stood almost alone in the Church courts, the great majority of the members, though ardent Tories, being violent admirers of a system of disabilities which Whigs and Cameronians had invented. He was of opinion that religious tests in the universities should no longer be maintained; that the running of trains on Sunday should be left to the discretion of the companies themselves; and that secular instruction could be and should be separated from religious instruction in a national system of education. Dr Muir and his friends stood aghast. Here was the revolution among them with a vengeance! And yet there can be but little doubt now that Dr Lee, in desiring to terminate the connection between what was

essentially a scheme of pains and penalties, and the Church of which he was a member, was taking the true course to make her position tenable in the nineteenth century. If primary education, or academic privilege, or Christian freedom could not be obtained because the Church stood in the way, it was pretty evident to his mind that sooner or later the Church would be removed out of the way. And if the supervision of education, for instance, was once taken away from the National Church (which supervision, if permitted at all, was most naturally and least dangerously lodged in her hands), he saw no good reason why it should be intrusted to this one or that one of the *sects* which happened to number a majority of ignorant or fanatical ratepayers in any particular parish. All this (although based, as it seems to me, on a really prudent Conservatism) sounded very strange, coming twenty years ago from the lips of a clergyman in the Presbytery of Edinburgh. Time, however, has taught, and is teaching, many things even to the most unteachable. Many interesting extracts might be made from Dr Lee's speeches on these subjects. As it is necessary to select, however, I prefer to give this letter, addressed to Mr George Combe, which indicates in an interesting way, the terms on which he stood, and the relations which he maintained, with some of the most "advanced" of his contemporaries:—

"You will never lose my affection and esteem so long as I can appreciate moral principle, love of truth, courage, and benevolence; that is, so long as you continue what you are, and I retain the same capacity of admiring what is good which I now have.

"I am not yet in circumstances to give any opinion of your work as a whole; but I am satisfied it contains not only what is highly important, but highly needful.

"I do not disguise from myself, what you, I believe, are quite aware of, that you and I have some very deep differences of opinion. Your philosophy teaches that this world is a complete system. Mine, if I may presume to call my poor thoughts by that name, regards it as a vestibule only to a mansion far greater than itself. I am thankful, however, to you for the great light you have thrown upon this vestibule: the vast mass of new and important truths which you have discovered, systematised, expounded, and made practicable and useful; and the vast mass of sophisms and errors you have refuted. Also your religiousness of spirit, and constant habit of associating nature with God, as His creature, and depending upon Him, and expressing His character and His will, attract my sympathy strongly towards you. I am thus delighted to agree and sympathise with you so far; and in the matter respecting which we hold different views, it is useless for us to speak, for it is not likely either of us will ever relinquish his present opinion. For myself and all friends I pray constantly that the Father of lights may teach us all that is needful, and preserve us from all errors that are hurtful and dangerous; and, sensible of my own ignorance, I am not disposed to call those that differ with me by hard names, or even to think of them harshly. On the contrary, I desire to love what is good, and esteem what is excellent in all men. After this explanation we may feel at perfect ease. Considering how little we know, and how imperfectly and dimly even that little is comprehended, we may well practise forbearance toward each other in these matters in which we may differ, while we entertain a cordial sympathy in these respecting which we agree."

It is not easy to define Dr Lee's ecclesiastical position with exactness. The key to it may be found, I think, in his profound attachment to the Church of Scotland. His mind was not a clerical mind; he despised and ridiculed the exclusive pretensions of the priesthood; but he knew that religion was one of the master-passions of the human soul, and he was of opinion that this powerful influence could be directed to the highest public advantage when associated with the commonwealth. Imagination, when divorced from common-sense, was apt to run riot; and the vagrant and eccentric impulses of ecclesiastics required to be controlled by the politic intellect of statesmen. Coleridge's luminous defence of a State Church as a powerful bulwark of free religious opinion recommended itself to Dr Lee's mind. He felt that if the Church were abolished —if every spiritually-minded man was forced to become a member of one or other of the *sects*— there would be at once less freedom among the ministers, less liberality among the members, of ecclesiastical societies; and this simply because the elimination of the lay or political element would remove the secular restraints which temper the fervour of zeal and the intolerance of piety. His views are very clearly set forth in an article on the judgment of the Privy Council on *The Essays and Reviews* case, in which he contrasts

the judicial tribunals of the Scotch and English Churches—the one composed of clergymen, the other of lawyers—not to the advantage of the former:—

"It is easy to see that ecclesiastical laws, administered by men who, besides being laymen, were also statesmen and men of the world, more concerned about the practical interests of religion and morality than about the distinctions of speculative theology, should thus gradually liberalise the laws, until at last the interpretations became more comprehensive than was in the mind of the Legislature in passing them. When clergymen, on the contrary, are the judges, the opposite has always taken place, and always will. For clergymen never can be brought to understand that what they have to decide in such cases is not a matter of opinion, but of law—whereas they always make it a matter of opinion. This is not only natural, but inevitable; and 'the freedom of synodical action,' exercised the last one hundred and eighty years in the Church of Scotland, confirms and illustrates this in the most impressive manner. The Church Courts of the Scottish Establishment, not content with enacting and seeking from Parliament the enactment of the strictest and narrowest laws, have interpreted these laws uniformly, or almost uniformly, in the strictest manner, and in the narrowest spirit; so that, sectarian as the constitutions and regulations themselves might be, the judicial interpretations were far more so."

But (even admitting that a State Church is of undoubted public advantage) to a man of Dr Lee's inquisitive habit of mind the preliminary difficulty presented itself,—How about the dogma which the State Church promulgates: is it true or is it false? It is not to be denied that there are many propositions in the Confession of Faith

and the other standards of the Church which Dr Lee could not cordially accept. Nay, one is entitled to give a far wider sweep to the accusation, if it be an accusation. There are certain propositions in these documents which no clergyman of the Church of Scotland does believe, nor (unless his ignorance of scientific matters is absolute) can believe. If he holds, for instance, that erroneous doctrinal opinion should be suppressed by the civil magistrate, or that God created the world and all things therein out of nothing in the space of six days (as the Confession asserts), he must be in a condition of singular, and, for a member of a learned profession, most discreditable and most inexcusable ignorance.

Dr Lee believed firmly in what may be called the characteristic and fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. He believed in the existence of God; he believed in the revelation of God's truth and goodness in the person of Christ; he believed in the fact of sin; he believed in the power of God to release him from sin; he believed in the resurrection of the dead, and the life immortal. These last words, indeed, conveyed no very definite conception to his mind, as he frequently confessed. But he knew that God was the God of truth, of fact, of reality; and though it might be impossible for mortal beings to penetrate through the darkness which veiled Him, yet

if they acted righteously, justly, mercifully (as He has manifestly ordained that they should act); if they loved truth with a perfect love, and strove to cast out from them all untruth, dissimulation, hypocritical pretence,—they might leave their future very confidently in His hands, feeling assured that somehow what is immortal in them would be brought to agree with the eternal facts—would be anchored securely upon a rock which is planted beyond the waves of time.

But while Dr Lee could thus give a general assent to the doctrinal scheme of the Scotch Church, I do not think that I am mistaken when I say that many of the characteristic propositions *

* Divested of its technical phraseology, the theological position of the Scotch Confession may be defined in half-a-dozen sentences: Man had incurred the displeasure of Almighty God by eating forbidden fruit. For this act of disobedience he and his innocent offspring had been devoted to everlasting fiery torments—justly and righteously devoted; but out of the depths of His divine compassion, the Lord had contrived a scheme by which a very select minority might be enabled to escape. His only begotten Son was sent to bear the punishment which they had incurred, and which otherwise would have fallen upon them. The elect, thus vicariously ransomed, are to be taken up to dwell with their Master and Saviour in heaven. The remainder of the human race—justly damned, and lying beyond the margin of the Redeemer's blood-stained robe—for some inscrutable reason not within our finite capacity of understanding, are to be cast into the tormenting fire of hell, where they will spend eternity in the pursuit of evil, and in sinking lower and lower into the hideous abyss of sin.

of Calvinistic theology were regarded by him with undisguised repugnance; and the question may therefore quite fairly be raised, Why then did he remain in the Church?—a large and intricate question which cannot be exhaustively considered at present, but which, in the existing attitude of religious belief, merits more attention than it has yet received. I can merely indicate the considerations which to my mind rendered such a course justifiable on the part of Dr Lee, and of others similarly situated.

The official confession of a National Church ought to be in the main a *colourless* document,—composed, so to speak, in the neutral tints. It should reflect the ripe and sober Christian intelligence of the nation,—not the theories of casuists, nor the fanaticism of partisans. In its statement of dogma it should be confined to the indisputable truths of Christianity,—the broad general doctrines which are universally interesting to mankind. The compilers of the Confession complied with none of these conditions; nor, in many respects, was it possible that they could. The Westminster formularies were not put together during a period of peace: they were put together when the nation was in the throes of a great religious conflict. The Confession was penned upon the battle-field. It is the heated and excited manifesto of a victorious faction. It develops a

particular theory of Christianity with unmerciful and intolerant logic. Its framers did not put to themselves the question, "What forms of speech shall we select which will enlist the assent of all our countrymen who acknowledge the essential truths of Christianity?" They did not ask this question,—it was impossible that they could have asked it. They had shed their blood for subtleties of theological dogma, for niceties of ecclesiastical etiquette (bound up in some occult way, as we can see now, with the great cause of freedom), and they would have been more than mortal if, after winning the victory, they had failed to give a prominent place in their system to the party watchwords for which they had done and suffered so much.

It was framed, moreover, at a time when there was a passion for system. A symmetrical explanation of the relation of the Creator to His universe was what men desired to attain. They would not believe that there were any divine riddles in the world which it was impossible to solve, and therefore needless to interrogate. Thus their Confession contains a sort of prehistoric biography of the Almighty, and a confident analysis of the motives which have governed the divine mind from the furthest eternity. They had themselves been parties to more than one solemn league and covenant; and they fancied

that from a very early period their Maker had been similarly engaged. Thus we have in the Confession, not alone the central truths of Christianity, but fantastical logic and whimsical metaphysics applied to the most incomprehensible subjects. Nor is this all. It was framed at a time when the saints were the rulers of the earth, when the magistrate was looked upon as the servant of the Church, when a secular monarchy was being abolished, and the *Civitas Dei* was being established.* So it undertakes to rule the secular as well as the religious life, the State no less than the Church, the king no less than the priest. When it is recollected that these secular rules and precepts were laid down at an abnormal period of our history, during a period of passion, while a civil war was raging about the application of the rules and precepts in question, it is easy to see how inapplicable many of them must be to modern life, and how foreign to modern thought. Nor yet are the difficulties exhausted. A creed which was compiled two centuries ago grows obsolete, even in its language. To read it is to read an old author, or an author with whose tongue we are imperfectly acquainted. We cannot enter into the subtleties of his speech: nor can

* The Confession of Faith was approved by the Assembly which sat at Edinburgh in 1647, and ratified by the Parliament in 1649.

we follow the train of his thought. Our means of communicating with him are imperfect, not merely from the development of language, but from the progress of opinion. We stand on a different platform. His philosophy is not our philosophy: his science has been undermined by the science of a more advanced age: his theories of government, if now reduced to practice, would herald revolution.*

* I have sometimes tried to imagine how an indictment directed against an alleged contravention of the doctrinal scheme set forth in the Confession would be drawn. Aided by the Free Church Presbytery of Dundee, who, when recently dealing with the Rev. William Knight for heresy, actually prepared a "libel" against him, it would, I suppose, run somewhat as follows:—

"Mr John Brown, doctor of divinity, you are indicted and accused at the instance of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, that whereas the publishing of false and unsound doctrines at variance with the Confession of Faith, is an offence of an heinous nature and severely punishable, yet true it is and of verity that you, the said Mr John Brown, have been guilty of the said offence in respect that—

"(1.) In article 1 of said Confession it is set forth and declared as follows:—'*It pleased God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the beginning to create, or make of nothing, the world and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.*'

"But you, the said Mr John Brown, maintain, and have maintained, on divers occasions, that God did not create, or make of nothing, the world and all things therein, in the space of six days.

"(2.) In article 2 of said Confession it is declared and set forth as follows:—'*All persons publishing opinions contrary to the principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation, may be lawfully proceeded against by the civil magistrate, who hath authority, and it is his duty to take order that the truth of God be preserved pure and entire, and*

In what sense and to what extent was the Church to which Dr Lee belonged committed to this singular document? To what extent and in what sense was he himself committed?

The theologians of a remarkably speculative age had thrown its dogmatic convictions into a written creed. That these were the honest con-

that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed.'

"But you, the said Mr John Brown, maintain, and have maintained, on divers occasions, that the civil magistrate cannot lawfully take order that heresy be suppressed, and that when he does so he is guilty of persecution and tyranny.

"(3.) In article 3 of said Confession it is set forth and declared as follows:—'*Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others, are sinful, and cannot please God.*'

"But you, the said Mr John Brown, maintain, and have maintained, on divers occasions, that good works are not displeasing to God.

"(4.) In article 4 of said Confession it is set forth and declared as follows:—'*Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ, through the Spirit, who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth. . . . Others not elected cannot be saved; much less can men not professing the Christian religion, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess. . . . The punishments of such in the world to come are grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell-fire for ever.*'

"But you, the said Mr John Brown, maintain, and have maintained, on divers occasions, that in Christ all infants are saved, and that the other comfortable doctrines set forth in this article rest on no sure warrant of Scripture, or words to that effect.

"All which being found proven, you, the said Mr John Brown, ought to be punished, for the glory of God, the edification of the Church, and the deterring of others from committing the like offence in all time coming.

"A. Dryasdust,
"Presbytery Clerk.

"(A true copy.)"

victions of that age Dr Lee was willing to own. Historical critics, his own researches, assured him that such was the case. But how about all the ages which had followed, and during which the opinions of men had been undergoing constant change? Was the National Church the Church of the dead or the living nation? Of the living surely: and while living men might regard with interest and curiosity the religious manifestoes which their ancestors had issued, and which had answered the particular emergency and served the immediate purpose, they could not reasonably be asked to do more,—unless their own convictions assented. And if they did not assent, what then? Were they to relinquish their connection with the great missionary institute of the nation, and treat it as an historical curiosity only—a monument to the dead?

Dr Lee had subscribed the Standards before he was five-and-twenty. It is possible that even at the moment he could not, had he seriously examined these startling documents, have done so with an entirely clear conscience. But even had he been conscience-free to sign them then, it can hardly be maintained that he had thereby declared his intention to believe them always; had thereby devoted his intellect and his reason to life-long bondage and idiotic stagnation. He might indeed have quitted the Church: that was a simple and

indolent solution of the difficulty which the avowed enemies of the Church were constantly urging him to adopt; but he felt that with his views such an act would be one not merely of cowardice but of treachery. It would be a confession that in his opinion the Church's position was no longer tenable; that its existence was criminal; that its usefulness was at an end. But these were not his opinions: his opinions were just the reverse. Quit the Church, and join the ranks of those who were leagued against her!—the Church which, as he knew, was doing a great work in the land at a perilous crisis in her history,—withstanding, as only a vast organisation can withstand, the gathering powers of vice, of crime, of ignorance, and of suffering. At such a time could the good soldier cast away his colours, and desert the faithful souls who had been intrusted to his keeping? It would be a confession, moreover, that, in his judgment, a Church could not be *reformed* by its own members and office-bearers. He knew, indeed, that there were pious men who held that it was sacrilege to lay hands upon a single timber of the ark, however rotten. Only two courses were possible—acquiescence or desertion. You might believe and remain, or you might cease to believe, and then duty required you to go. Had Dr Lee belonged to a private sect he might have recognised the cogency of the argument,—sec-

tarianism being a matter of self-will, at least of choice. But the obligations of a Churchman to the Church were similar in nature, he thought, to the obligations of a citizen to the State. When a loyal citizen became of opinion that the State should be reconstructed, he did not hesitate to say so; nay, he exerted himself in every way to obtain the reform which he considered desirable. Such a man in so acting was not guilty of disloyalty; rather would he have been guilty of disloyalty had he deserted the State, because time, and patience, and skill, and judgment, and tact were required to achieve reform. The Churchman had sworn to maintain the Church in the same sense that the citizen had sworn to maintain the monarchy. Civil reformers were not guilty of "treason" because they laboured to bring the forms of the constitution into harmony with the necessities of the people; ecclesiastical reformers were not guilty of "perjury" because they laboured to bring the dogmas of the Church into harmony with the convictions of the age. The capacity for doctrinal development was essential to the existence of every Christian society, and the men who framed the Standards were ready to recognise the fact. "We see not all things yet," they said; "but we trust the Lord hath yet more light to break forth from His holy Word." And impelled by this conviction, they denounced in very

noble words the habit of mind which would claim for any document devised by man an unalterable authority over the conscience of mankind. "God alone," the Confession of Faith declares, "is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His Word, or beside it, in matters of faith and worship. So that to believe such doctrines, and obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also."

It will be seen from what has been said that Dr Lee was one of the earliest leaders in Scotland of what in England has been called the Broad Church party; and the offence of belonging to that party was constantly urged against him by his opponents with more or less effect. Why in ecclesiastical societies breadth should be regarded as a defect, and narrowness as a merit, has never been very clear to the majority of educated Christians who are not the partisans of any particular theology. Breadth is a good thing in itself, and is a quality, moreover, which appears to have been regarded with favour by the founders of our religion. "For Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." There can be no

objection, therefore, to breadth in the visible any more than in the invisible Church, unless, indeed, it be attained at the expense and by the sacrifice of something more precious. But, as Dr Lee understood it, the Broad Church, in its aspiration after comprehension, sacrificed nothing that it was desirable to retain. It preferred the simple formularies of primitive Christianity to the more involved and metaphysical explanations of later theologians; and, leaving all else to the reason and conscience of the individual believer, it proposed to establish the Christian Church on the great fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. The constitution of the Church of England has expressly provided for the existence of such a party within its walls; and those who have read Principal Tulloch's admirable work on *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy*, must be aware that the English Broad Churchmen have an historical as well as a constitutional position, and a roll of saintly names of which any Church might be proud. The genius of the Westminster Confession is more exclusive and exacting (though in no other Confession, curiously enough, as we have just seen, has the freedom of the conscience been more nobly vindicated); but it may be safely asserted that a certain measure of latitude of opinion, a certain liberty of prophesying, is implied and involved in the very conception of a National

Church. The creed of a sect must be sectarian: whereas the creed of a National Church is necessarily framed with a view to comprehension. Whatever may have been true of the past, however, it is at least abundantly clear that an Established Church is possible NOW only on some such basis as Dr Lee was prepared to recommend in that portion of his work on *The Reform of the Church of Scotland,* which, unhappily, he did not live to complete.

The reformation of the Church which Dr Lee contemplated embraced reforms both of worship and doctrine. He proposed to make the forms of worship more seemly and attractive; and either to substitute certain plain and simple articles of union for the minute and metaphysical definitions of the Confession, or to relax the stringency of the subscription which the Church had imposed, without legal warrant, as he believed.

As regards the latter — the relation of the Church to its dogmatic formulæ—the movement had not gone far at the time of Dr Lee's death. He made one or two brilliant speeches, he wrote one or two unanswerable articles, in favour of releasing the lay members and office-bearers of the Church, at least, from the bondage of subscription. He had good hope that, were the terms of subscription to be modified as they had been modified in the Church of England, further free-

dom might be speedily achieved. "Will any one explain," he inquires, "why a minister of the Church of Scotland should be required to profess above a hundred times more faith, or, what is the same thing, a hundred times more theological opinion, than is thought sufficient for a clergyman of the Church of England?—and why a layman—an ignorant mechanic he may be, a small farmer, or shopkeeper, generally a person in the lower, or, at the best, in the middle ranks of society, who has only the commonest education, and may be endowed with the most slender abilities—should be compelled, on entrance to the humble office of an elder in a Scotch parish or congregation, to make a profession incomparably larger, stricter, ten times more difficult to understand, and a hundred times more difficult to adopt, than is demanded of the vicars and rectors, the deans and archdeacons, the bishops and archbishops, of the Church of England?" No one, so far as I know, up to the present time, has offered any answer to these inquiries that is not intrinsically absurd. How, then, does it happen that such an unaccountable anomaly is permitted to continue? *

It can only be said, in reply, that a philosophical inquirer into the nature of the Scottish people lights upon a nestful of anomalies.

* The terms of subscription required from elders have this year (1875) been relaxed by the General Assembly.

Scotchmen, in so far as the things of this world are concerned, are as vigorous, original, and independent as the people of any country under the sun. They are daring reasoners. They are audacious speculators. Adam Smith advocated free trade, David Hume vindicated free thinking, a hundred years ago. In political matters Scotch constituencies almost exclusively belong to what is called and believed in certain quarters to be the "Liberal" persuasion, although the liberality is not incompatible with narrow sectarianism and mean fanaticism. Yet this keenly practical, this vigorously independent people, draw a sharp line of demarcation between things spiritual and things temporal. On one side of the line they are active, acute, apt to defy authority; on the other they are as torpid as jelly-fish. About the next world, and about the relations between that world and this, they believe as they are bidden. They are content to leave their spiritual interests in the hands of their spiritual advisers. The result, of course, is rather paradoxical. A community of free-thinkers is in religious bondage. A nation of philosophers is—not priest-ridden, but —creed-ridden.

Even to-day this description holds true of a large—the largest—portion of the Scottish people; but the really powerful section of the community, which, though always numerically in a minority,

is yet the real governing power in the country, has ceased to be docile. Such a revolt means much —how much will be more apparent by-and-by.

The narrative of the controversy which chiefly occupied Dr Lee's energies during his later years (the controversy occasioned by his efforts to improve the Scotch ritual) fills a large space—a somewhat too large space perhaps for English readers—in his biography. He had two objects in view in maintaining this contest—one direct, the other ulterior,—the direct one being the improvement of the Scotch forms of public worship —the ulterior, and perhaps the more important in his estimation, being the assertion, within certain reasonable limits, of personal and congregational freedom. In the utter paralysis of the rational and intellectual nature the ecclesiastical mind finds, has always found, its ideal of pious activity; the bonds cannot be too tightly drawn, the obedience cannot be too abject. Dr Lee believed, on the other hand, that, subject to certain inevitable constitutional restrictions, liberty was best,—liberty, the fruitful soil of true religion as of true manhood. The contest between him and his opponents latterly narrowed itself to a single point, almost invisible to the unassisted eye of a layman—Can a minister legally read his prayers from a printed book, or must he confine himself to manuscript or to memory? A small question

in itself no doubt, but one which, in certain aspects, involved the largest considerations of ecclesiastical freedom. So Dr Lee fought it out to the bitter dregs. I cannot think that he was wrong to do so; every year that passed, as the weary controversy progressed, familiarised the minds of clergy and laity with the larger claims and the wider issues, which it more or less directly embraced. In one view, indeed, the trivial character of the debate, so far from diminishing, added to its importance; for if in a matter so utterly insignificant a minister of the Church could be prevented from exercising his own judgment, it would then be clearly manifested that the democratic Church of Scotland, like certain other democracies, was essentially despotic, and that no liberty could be enjoyed within its walls.

The last stage of the contest involved, however, no point of intrinsic importance, because, with the single exception to which I have alluded, all the improvements in the manner of conducting public worship for which Dr Lee contended had been, one after another, allowed by the Church courts. That there was an urgent call for reform in these matters at the time when they first attracted his attention cannot be doubted. Scotchmen have a curious mixture of logic and passion in their natures, and when they left Rome the one as well as the other was permitted

to come into play. They would hold no intercourse with the enemy. They cast the accursed thing out of their gates. They hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord. The public worship of the Catholic Church had been splendidly conducted in noble edifices: the Reformers pulled down the "nests;" they dismantled the sacred buildings. The house of God was built like a barn; the service of God was denuded of every decent ceremonial. Rome had worshipped becomingly and reverently, as it seemed; but Scotchmen had discovered that this outward comeliness concealed hideous corruption; and so, in the violence of their recoil, they made their own forms of worship as uncouth, unimpressive, and unseemly as they could. They sat while praising God; they would not kneel when praying to Him; they abolished the liturgy, and encouraged vulgar and unregulated minds to address what was called "free prayer" to their Maker—a form of supplication that was sometimes didactic and sometimes colloquial, that ranged from antiquarian disquisition to local gossip; they made the sermon the chief feature of the service, prayer and praise being but the "*preleeminaries;*" they banished every instrument of music, and supplied the place of the organ by a precentor, who was commonly the village blacksmith or the village barber, and who

had no more notion of the value of sweet sounds, that give delight and hurt not, than a corn-crake or a bagpipe has. This was that simplicity of worship which has been so highly prized and so jealously guarded—for which good old Dr Muir would have laid down his life gladly—a simplicity, or rather nudity, which verges, as others have thought, on positive indecency. Whatever may have been the provocation once, this unreasonable feud with the externals of religion could no longer be justified; and Dr Lee, setting his face against the Puritanic tradition, strove to soften the austere hardness of Scottish piety. He tried to persuade his countrymen that they might lawfully praise God upon their feet, and pray to Him from their knees. He tried to persuade them that "the kist of whistles" might be safely introduced into the sanctuary; that the praise of God was a musical exercise to be relished, and not an infliction to be dreaded. He composed a Book of Common Prayer for the use of his congregation, which for solemn feeling, comprehensive supplication, and a noble (not fantastic or Puritanic) application of Scriptural language, recalls the greatest of liturgies. He was anxious, in short, that Scotch men and women, when they entered the temple of God, should maintain that propriety of demeanour which they observed outside its walls.

With his own congregation he had immediate and signal success. Many strangers visiting Edinburgh attended the service at the Greyfriars. The old church, which was associated with much that was characteristic in Scotch ecclesiastical history, was destroyed by fire in 1845; but the new building—lofty, spacious, and ungalleried—was not unworthy of its site. In that church the Episcopalian listened to prayers which, if not so grand as his own, were yet solemn, impressive, and devotional; to admirable music; to a sermon rich in practical wisdom, simply and quietly expressed, yet keen with epigram, and rising at times into eloquent rebuke and exhortation; to a religious service, in short, which had the great merit of being neither tedious nor repetitive, and which, knit together into a consistent whole, bore the impress of a single mind, fitted by nature to order and organise.

It need hardly be said that public worship is now very generally conducted throughout Scotland with amenity and reverence. Kneeling at prayer has become general; carefully written prayers are used by many of the most distinguished clergymen; organs have been introduced into not a few of the largest churches; the music, instrumental and vocal, is generally well executed and carefully chosen. An air of solemnity and impressiveness has been cast around the bald

and uninviting service of the Covenanters, and Scotsmen have at last consented to behave with decency in the sanctuary. To the resolute efforts of Dr Lee, to his keen perception of what was indecorous and unbecoming, as well as to his fine taste and cultivated feeling for the beautiful, the improvement is mainly to be attributed. Here and there even yet one meets with a man who will not be persuaded that it is fit to stand during praise and to kneel during prayer. But everywhere throughout the Church the new forms are spreading rapidly, and the zealots who worried Dr Lee into his grave beat the air in vain. It is plain to the apprehension of the dullest clown in the remotest parish that the Majesty of Earth and Heaven should be addressed on bended knees, that the mercy of God should be reverently asked by kneeling worshippers; and against an instinct, wide as universal Christendom—nay, wide as universal humanity—it is folly to contend.

Such were the various forms of work—secular and ecclesiastical, political and polemical—to which, during the later years of his life, Dr Lee devoted his restless and indomitable energies. He believed that there was a great career possible to his Church if she could be made to understand her true position—if she could be induced to ally herself with the vast intellectual forces which were at work around her. It was his anxious

desire to keep her abreast of a scientific age, and so win back to her service its alienated intellect. The cultivation of fanaticism, bigotry, and superstition,—uncouth piety, unmanageable formulas, —might, he thought, be safely left to the sects: on *that* ground she could not compete with them: to her a calmer and nobler field of spiritual work had been assigned. He would have her appeal to the rational and æsthetic principles of human nature. The highest thought of the time, he held, though not dogmatic, was profoundly religious;—he asked the Church to slacken the bonds which a passionate dogmatism had imposed. The service of Almighty God should be always performed in a seemly and impressive fashion: whereas the purest taste was constantly outraged by the sullen austerity of Puritanic worship. Dr Lee did not live to complete the work which he had begun; but season after season the seed which was sown by him brings forth fruit more abundantly; and while the sectarianism of the sects grows daily more bitter and barren, the Church of Robert Lee and Norman Macleod, of Tulloch, and Caird, and Wallace, widens its borders and multiplies its activities.*

* A liberality of feeling notably exhibited last year by the admission of the Rev. Mr Knight to the Church by an overwhelming vote of the General Assembly, —an admission of immense significance.

The contest, however, became very bitter towards its close. Upon Dr Lee's fine and highly wrought organisation, upon his exquisitely sensitive temperament, the coarse invective of his assailants (directed against his scholarship, his ministerial usefulness and capacity, his honour, his honesty, his public career, and his private relations) fell like the blows of a hammer. These men, humanly speaking, killed Dr Lee; and it is therefore satisfactory to reflect that among them no name of mark appears, no name that the next generation will recognise, unless Dr Muir's can be so regarded. *He* at least will not be speedily forgotten, for to him (as the confidential adviser of Lord Aberdeen) more than to any other man the famous secession of 1843, which rent the Church in twain, is to be attributed.

Dr Muir belonged by nature to the priesthood, and his fine face was singularly characteristic of his rigid, ruthless, immovable dogmatism. It was the face of a Church aristocrat, who regarded with haughty contempt any manifestation of individual will, of plebeian force, of revolutionary passion. The standards of the Church were his Magna Charta, and whoever questioned their absolute infallibility was a rebel against God and the divine constitution of the universe. He was certainly not a stupid man,

but through the armour of his complacent piety no new idea could penetrate. He utterly declined to use his eyes; he was satisfied to cast them up to heaven in a sort of ecstatic incredulity. The Jews were admitted to Parliament, University Tests were abolished, Lord Palmerston was First Lord of the Treasury, and Dr Lee was Dean of the Chapel Royal,—and yet its bolts were stayed! His thin, beautifully chiselled lip was hardened into an expression of habitual, superior scorn. He was not an ungenerous man—far from it—but in the cause of God (as he esteemed it) he could use the hardest, most cruel, and most unrighteous words. Three hundred years ago these cruel words would have ripened into evil deeds, and Dr Muir, born in Catholic Spain, would have made a mighty Inquisitor. He would have warmed his hands at the fire which consumed a heretic, and thanked God that he was privileged to contribute, however humbly, to the advancement of His kingdom. On the other hand, he would have made almost as constant a martyr—would have died, with inflexible obstinacy and heroic blindness and unreasonableness, for the most outrageous proposition that Pope or Council ever decreed. To such a mind, authority, tradition, usage was everything; he had an absolute incapacity for recognising the truth simply as such, and apart

from the forms in which it had been conveyed to him.

Between Dr Muir and Dr Lee there could be no union. They were wide asunder as the poles. Dr Muir did not read character very keenly or rapidly; but in this case the instinct of antipathy sharpened his senses. One does not use too strong language when one says that Dr Muir actually hated Dr Lee. He himself would not have hesitated to own that he did hate him. Was he not a priest of God, and bound to abhor the works of the devil? And "that individual" (as he invariably called Dr Lee), if not strictly speaking the Evil One in person, was clearly doing his work in this world,—seeing that he knelt when he prayed, stood when he sang, read from a printed book, and recommended the organ! These were all manifestations of the spirit of revolt, insubordination, discontent, for indulging in which the rebel angels had been cast out from heaven.*

* This is an extract from one of these singular and grotesque assaults upon Dr Lee:—"I don't wish to be thought a terrorist: I don't pretend to be prophetic; but it is most evident to me that the work that has been begun and carried on so far has been begun and carried on under the sinister influence of the great enemy of the Church—that enemy who has always set himself in opposition to the truth as it is in Jesus, and to the work of conversion—*I mean Satan himself.* It is my firm conviction that, proceeding as we are now doing, this blessed institution of ours, which through grace has been so ser-

Dr Lee (after completing an elaborate appeal to the Assembly which was about to meet) was attacked by paralysis during the spring of 1867, but he made a partial rally, and his death did not take place till nearly a year afterwards—14th March 1868.* Of that last year Dr Story writes:—

"On the 22d of May, the day before the meeting of the Assembly, he rode out to Colinton, to visit Lord Dunfermline. He sat with him for some time. Lord Dunfermline thought that he never had heard him converse more forcibly. There was no shadow of impending disaster over the brightness and cheerfulness of this last meeting with his friend. On his way home Dr Lee had got to the west end of Princes Street, between two and three in the afternoon, when he was seen to reel in his saddle, and then to fall to the ground. His servant was behind him, and he was immediately lifted and carried home in a cab. Dr Henderson was soon with him, and found that he had been struck with paralysis of the left side. The shock was a severe one; and he lay prostrated for many days, unable to concern himself in any of his public interests. During this period his case came before the

viceable generation after generation, is about to be destroyed. I own to you that my heart has been deeply oppressed by all that has been going on amongst us, *under a thorough conviction that it is a plan instigated by the great enemy of evangelical truth*, for the purpose of destroying in our land that which has been the main bulwark of the truth, and the main instrument of circulating it and impressing it on the minds of the people."

* Dr Lee was buried in the Grange Cemetery at Edinburgh, where many of his children had been laid before him. Over his grave a monument designed by Mr John Hutchison, R.S.A., has been erected,—a plain granite slab with a medallion head in marble,—an authentic and animated representation of a keen and powerful face.

Assembly. He was represented at the bar by his friends Mr Skelton and Mr Shand, advocates, who craved that the case might be postponed. This was at once agreed to; and some kindly and sympathetic words, such as generous opponents might fitly utter, were spoken on the occasion by Dr Pirie and Dr Cook. The protracted discussions upon Innovations thus came to a vague and undefined close. The 'Greyfriars case' remains still unfinished—ending only in a postponement. Dr Lee's friends were not sorry that it should end thus, as they knew that, if the appeal had been heard, the decision of the Assembly would have been adverse. They knew that his long contest had produced results sufficiently substantial, even although his right to use a printed book of prayers had not been vindicated.* The broad results—of which organs, choirs, devotional postures, decorated churches, and church-service societies, were the visible indications—were, a deeper and purer devotional feeling permeating the mind of the Church, and especially of the younger clergy; a more exalted sense of the solemnity and necessity of worship as the true bond of union among Christians; a more charitable, liberal, and catholic tone of thought and sentiment; a franker recognition of the diversity of forms and gifts through which the one Spirit may develop its growing life."

This is well put; and it is only necessary to add that those who fancy, as some have fancied, that there is any sympathy with the claims and traditions of "Prelacy" in the movement which Dr Lee did so much to forward, mistake it utterly. This mistake, however, was made in more quarters

* But written and printed prayers are now in common use, and no Presbytery of the Church would venture to "libel" the minister who used them; so that even as regards this point, Dr Lee, in securing liberty for those who succeeded him, has virtually triumphed.

than one, and notably by a benevolent Bishop of the Episcopalian community in Scotland, who for many years issued pastorals to his flock and addressed letters to the newspapers, in the belief that Scotchmen were yearning to return to the fold from which they had strayed. A profound misconception! The people of Scotland—and Dr Lee was Scotch to the core—love their Church as well for its own sake as for its history. They see in it the assertion of a great principle,—the assertion of the freedom and responsibility of the individual conscience as opposed to a system of sacramental mystifications and sacerdotal pretences. They have snapt the chain which bound them to ancient Christendom advisedly and deliberately. They need no slippery roll of anointed bishops to lead them back to the apostles and to their Lord. They believe that wherever and whenever two or three Christian men are gathered together in His name, there and then Christ is in the midst of them. They fancy, moreover, that this belief of theirs lies at the root of all true spiritual freedom: and they are proud of the clear insight which enabled their ancestors to grasp, and of the stern tenacity with which they clung to, this rich and fruitful principle of the religious life.

Such was the Dr Lee that we knew,—a truly

devout man, a loyal and indefatigable friend, a most admirable teacher and preacher, an incisive reasoner and thinker, a great controversialist. It was inevitable that such a man should leave many enemies behind him; but even his enemies will admit that when he died, a lofty, ardent, and generous spirit passed away from among us,—a man who enunciated what he believed to be the truth with fearless frankness and a rare intrepidity, but whose heart was tender as a woman's, and in whose soul no base, nor mean, nor evil thing lodged.

"Who is the happy warrior?" is a question which has been asked and answered by the great moral poet of England. Every line of the reply might be applied, with curious felicity, to Dr Lee:—

" 'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace:
But who if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired.
He who, though thus endued as with a sense,
And faculty for storm and turbulence

Is yet a soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes,—
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,—
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall to sleep without his fame
And leave a dead unprofitable name,
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause."

SO THE ONE EVENT comes to us all, and the men and women we knew quit our society to mix with the mighty Shades of the past. The bodily vestment wears out sooner or later, and its unquiet tenant steals away into the unknown darkness which girdles this visionary life. Whither? we ask wistfully as the parting spirit passes across the threshold; but, however poet or theologian may feign, the answer can be, at best, but formal and tentative. "The E'en brings a' hame," says an old Scottish proverb, instinct with hopefulness and homely tenderness; and as we muse in the moonlight, which floods all this Northern Sea, over words which grow more suggestive the longer they are dwelt upon, they shape themselves gradually into a strain which may be not altogether unfamiliar to certain readers of this volume of Apologetics:—

"THE E'EN BRINGS A' HAME."

Upon the hills the wind is sharp and cold,
The sweet young grasses wither on the wold,
And we, O Lord, have wandered from Thy fold;
But evening brings us home.

Among the mists we stumbled, and the rocks
Where the grey lichen whitens, and the fox
Watches the straggler from the scattered flocks;
But evening brings us home.

The sharp thorns prick us, and our tender feet
Are cut and bleeding, and the lambs repeat
Their pitiful complaints,—oh, rest is sweet
When evening brings us home.

We have been wounded by the hunter's darts.
Our eyes are very heavy, and our hearts
Search for Thy coming,—when the light departs
At evening, bring us home.

The darkness gathers. Thro' the gloom no star
Rises to guide us. We have wandered far.
Without Thy lamp we know not where we are.
At evening bring us home.

The clouds are round us, and the snow-drifts thicken.
O Thou dear Shepherd, leave us not to sicken
In the waste night,—our tardy footsteps quicken,
At evening bring us home.

THE APPENDIX.

No. I. GEORGE CANNING AND 'THE GREVILLE MEMOIRS.'

No. II. PROFESSOR AYTOUN'S BROADSHEET ON THE DISRUPTION.

THE APPENDIX.

No. I.

GEORGE CANNING AND 'THE GREVILLE MEMOIRS.'

"The Duke of Wellington talked of Canning a great deal the other day at my mother's. He said his talents were astonishing, his compositions admirable, that he possessed the art of saying exactly what was necessary, and passing over those topics on which it was not advisable to touch, his fertility and resources inexhaustible. He thought him the finest speaker he had ever heard"—(August 10, 1827). "If Canning had had a fair field he would have done great things, for his lofty and ambitious genius took an immense sweep, and the vigour of his intellect, his penetration and sagacity, enabled him to form mighty plans and work them out with success. Notwithstanding his failings, he was the greatest man we have had for a long time, and if life had been spared to him, and opposition had not been too much for him, he would have raised our character abroad, and perhaps found remedies for our difficulties at home"—(January 22, 1830). "If Canning were now alive we might hope to steer through these difficulties; but if he had lived we should probably never have been in them. He

was the only statesman who had sagacity to enter into and comprehend the spirit of the times, and to put himself at the head of that movement which was no longer to be arrested"—(August 31, 1830). "God only knows how it will all end. There has been but one man for many years past able to arrest this torrent, and that was Canning; and him the Tories—idiots that they were, and never discovering that he was their best friend—hunted to death with their besotted and ignorant hostility"—(August 11, 1831). "Just before he was going to India, Holland called on him, and Canning dined at Holland House. On one of these occasions they had a conversation on the subject of Reform, when Canning said he saw it was inevitable, and he was not sorry to be away while the measure was accomplished; but that if he had been here while it was mooted, he could have let those gentlemen (the Whig aristocracy) *know that they should gain nothing by it*"—(September 19, 1834). — THE GREVILLE MEMOIRS. 1874.

IN a paper on Canning written many years ago, I expressed the opinion that his political genius and capacity were of a first-rate order—almost, if not quite unique in our parliamentary history—an opinion which was pronounced at the time (when it was the fashion to ridicule Tory statesmanship, past and present,—a fashion now passing away), by more than one influential critic to be extravagantly eulogistic. The recently published journals of Mr Greville—some extracts from which are prefixed to this note—confirm, I think, the impression of Mr Canning's superiority to most of his contemporaries which I had intended to convey. It may be said that, as a general rule, the Tory party since its complete reconciliation to the monarchy under Chatham has been distinctively the party of *rest*, I am firmly persuaded that the men who most vividly realise

that many centuries of substantially good government in any nation is a really surprising phenomenon (seeing how slight and insecure the partition is which at any moment divides order from anarchy), are the men who are calculated to do the state best service. But the natural tendency of these men, especially when organised into a political party, is to become simply obstructive,—clinging tenaciously to institutions after the life has gone out of them, and when they have become incompatible with the existing manners and ideas. To the party of rest any kind of change is always keenly annoying, and sometimes intolerably hateful. Once or twice within the era of our parliamentary history they have clung to the Old until it has been roughly and violently snatched from their grasp. The Reform Bill of 1832 was a practical revolution, because the Tories, without any competent leaders, were at the moment utterly unreasonable; and it was Mr Peel, more than Lord John Russell, who made a sweeping reform inevitable. No society, however solidly constructed, can afford to be periodically in convulsions; and the defenders of things as they are require to be convinced ever and again, that a position which has become untenable must be frankly and good-humouredly abandoned. This was the moral which Bolingbroke vainly and more than once tried to impress upon the Jacobite squires of his own day,—a moral which has been successively enforced by Pitt, and Canning, and Peel, and Derby, and Disraeli. Only to men of supreme courage, of first-rate capacity, and of a certain imaginative nobility and loftiness of temperament, can the work of conversion be intrusted; and it is every day becoming clearer, that if Canning had been spared, the whole course of recent English political history might have been altered. The prolonged exclusion of the Tory party from office is now quite clearly

seen to have been due to the intemperance of their opposition in 1831 and 1832 to the constitutional reconstruction which, in some shape or other, could no longer be delayed.

In connection with the question of the morality of party progress, I may here reprint from a series of articles contributed to *Fraser's Magazine* in 1863, a passage on the well-known controversy which was carried on nearly forty years ago by Lord Macaulay and Lord Mahon (Earl Stanhope) as to the transmutation of the Whig and Tory parties. Earl Stanhope has pointed out to me that I did not follow the discussion to its final close. "If you will now refer to Lord Macaulay's second article on Lord Chatham, as published in the *Edinburgh Review*, October 1841, and since collected in his Essays, you will find from the opening passage,—enforced by a most ingenious illustration from Dante's Malebolge,—that Lord Macaulay's opinion of the point at issue had come to be very nearly the same as mine" (18th March 1868).

"Twenty years ago, Mr Macaulay and Lord Mahon—the Whig and Tory champions—had a keen encounter. Lancelot and Sir Tristram were intrepid and courteous gentlemen—'the courtliest knights that ever bare shield; the kindliest men that ever stroke with sword; the meekest men and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies;'—and the modern knights, though they struck freely, and though some ugly cuts were given, preserved in the literary lists a dash of the old-fashioned chivalry. The *gage d'amour* which Lord Mahon undertook to defend against all comers was a somewhat startling paradox. 'I cannot but pause to observe,' he said, 'how much the course of a century has inverted the meaning of our party nicknames—how much a modern Tory resembles a Whig of Queen Anne's reign, and

a Tory of Queen Anne's reign a modern Whig.' Mr Macaulay lifted the glove. The modern Tories resembled the Whigs of Queen Anne's reign because the principles which the Whigs announced had been accepted by the Tories. The Whig had remained consistent; the Tory had come over to the enemy. Mr Disraeli, during the great Peel battle, illustrated the same proposition by a homely figure and in familiar phrase. Sir Robert had found the Whigs bathing, and had run away with their clothes. It may be questioned whether the retort, though supported by Macaulay's fluent and facile logic, and adorned with a wealth of pictorial illustration, is entirely satisfactory. Is it fair to assume that a party must be inconsistent because it adopts a policy which, fifty years before, it had opposed? During these fifty years the world has altered. Truth, in a political sense, is a relative term. The science of politics is not one of the exact sciences. Lord Bolingbroke correctly described the duty of a practical statesman when he said to Sir William Windham, 'It is as much a mistake to depend upon that which is true but impracticable at a certain time, as to depend on that which is neither true nor practicable at any time.' In this view, the Tory who votes against an extension of the franchise during one century, and who votes in favour of its extension during the next, may be acting not only with sagacity but with consistency. The Whigs did not, as matter of fact, propose to reform the constituencies during the first half of the eighteenth century. Reform, as we understand it, was an unfamiliar idea to Somers and to Walpole. There were men of that generation who desired to subvert the Constitution, and there were men prepared to defend it in its integrity; but there was no middle party. The notion of constitutional reconstruction (which we owe originally to the second Pitt) was the growth of a later age. Had Somers and Walpole, indeed, undertaken to extend the suffrage during the reign of Anne or during the reign of her successor, would our opinion of their sagacity have been heightened? Surely not. If the ten-pounders had

been in possession of electoral privileges in the year 1714, it is more than probable that the Stuarts would have been restored. The reigning dynasty was acceptable to the middle classes; but that ignorant and prejudiced class of the population which such an extension of the suffrage would have enfranchised were, with the great mass of the Tory gentry, attached by sentiment and by tradition to the exiled family.

"Moreover, it is positively incorrect to affirm that during the early part of the eighteenth century the Whigs represented an advanced and the Tories a stationary policy. 'The absolute position of the parties,' Lord Macaulay remarked, 'has been altered; the relative position remains the same.' The proposition is directly at variance with the fact. As matter of fact the parties *had* changed places. The order of nature had been reversed. The tail went first; the head followed. And the anomaly is easily explained. The Tories wanted power; the Whigs possessed it. The Whigs had attacked the prerogative when it was directed against themselves, but the prerogative occasioned them no uneasiness when a Whig minister was in office. Impelled by similar motives, the Tories, when an unfriendly family of Dutchmen first ascended the throne, were willing to impose limitations on that kingly authority which, as an ordinance of God, had once been vehemently defended by them. So also with regard to the question of electoral reform. As long as the Whigs corrupted the electoral bodies, the Tories clamoured for change; while the Whigs did not become reformers until the electoral bodies, under the second Pitt, went over by tens and by fifties to the Tories. Such, in all ages, is human nature; and incorruptible patriots as well as arbitrary ministers are subject to its infirmities.

"But it is fair to own that while the eloquence, the intrepidity, and the loftiness of Bolingbroke's political writings may have clothed historical Toryism in borrowed plumes, its pretensions to a more catholic temper than professed Liberalism shows are not entirely unfounded. It has been

said of Walpole, by his most eloquent apologist, that his heart was not desperately wicked, and that when he could not promote his own interests, he was willing to promote the interests of his country. The basest faction, in like manner, is never quite destitute of public spirit. And various circumstances have contributed to mitigate the austerity of Toryism. The Whig has his dogmas; the Tory has his traditions. The Whig is a political doctrinaire; the Tory is a political devotee. The Whig believes in the divine origin of 'liberal measures,' and is ever ready to cure 'the something in the world amiss' by morsels of parliamentary reform, doled out with the precision of a parish overseer; the Tory looks more to the spirit than to the letter of the law, and his confession of faith is rather a sentiment than a creed. From this original difference of constitution many important practical consequences ensue. The Tories, for instance, recruit their ranks from the people; the Whig families keep the government among themselves. The Tories have been led by plebeians—Pitt, Addington, Canning, Peel, Disraeli, are the chiefs they have served; but the Whigs have consistently held that only a select tribe, a consecrated caste, can lawfully minister before the ark of the Constitution. More than seventy years ago, in a letter addressed to Junius, Horne Tooke complained warmly that the Rockingham connection preferred rather to make matches and to extend their family alliances, than 'to add their languid property and feeble character to the ability of a Chatham or the confidence of a public.' Even at this day the reproach (if it be a reproach—and a pure Whig would probably not consider it such) has not been quite wiped away. There are certain democratic instincts obscurely existing in Toryism, of which an oligarchic faction knows, and can know, nothing."

No. II.

PROFESSOR AYTOUN'S BROADSHEET ON THE DISRUPTION.

THE ELDER'S WARNING.

A LAY OF THE CONVOCATION.

" Noo, John Makgill, my elder, come listen to my word,
It's time to leave the harrows, it's time to draw the sword ;
The sheep may wander on the hill, the stots rout in the byre—
But another path is ours, John, through danger and through fire.
The cloud o' tribulation that we hae lang foreseen
Has gathered ower the land, John, like mists that rise at e'en ;
The palings o' oor vineyard are gey near broken doun,
An' the bits o' vines are trampled by greedy laird and loun.
The auld Erastian lords have put their feet upon oor necks,
And oor chalders they have dwindled to little mair than pecks ;
Thae weary interlocutors come pelting every day,
And the bills and the expenses are mair than we can pay.
But what is waur nor a,' John, while thus distressed we stand,
Black Prelacy is crawling like pushion through the land :
The scarlet woman will be here to sit within oor ha',
For when you see a Bishop, John, the Paip's no far awa'.
They'll soon be here to tithe ye—they'll tithe baith stot and stirk ;
O ! wae's me for the Covenant, and wae's me for the Kirk !
They're ettling for the manses, John—they're ettling fast and fain ;
And they'll be bringing Tam Dalyell and Claverse back again.

But we'll meet them on the ground, John, whaur we met them ance afore,
And pay thae weary Moderates a black and bitter score.
Sae lang's we're a' united, it winna do to bow
To the cankered Lords o' Session, and their wigs o' plastered tow.
We'll gather on the hills, John—we'll gather far and near,—
And Candlish he will lead the van—and Cunningham the rear;
We'll think o' Bothwell Brig, John, and the Raid o' Rullion Green;
We'll show them that we lo'e the Kirk far better nor the Queen.
Our Zion is in danger, sae tak' your auld claymore;
And tak' ye down the rauchan that hangs ahint the door,
And put your braid blue bannet on, an' we'll daunder up the glen,
And meet the bauld Conventicle, as our fathers did, ye ken."

Auld John Makgill he listened, and whiles he wat his thumb,
And whiles took up the cuttie-pipe that lay beside the lum,
And whiles he keekit in the pat that held the simmering kail;
But ne'er a bit he lifted his rauchan frae the nail.

"Nae doubt, nae doubt! an awfu' case! the times are unco hard,
And sae ye're thinking, minister, to leave your ain kail-yard,
And the bonny manse and stipend, that was worth twa hundred pund—
And the Netherhaugh glebe-acres—it's grand potato-grund!
An awfu' dispensation! I canna say ye're wrang,
For gin ye think ye shudna stop, ye're very right to gang.
And sae the Lords have beat the Kirk? that's waefu' news to tell;
Ye'se hae my blessing, minister, but I canna gae mysel'.
My auld claymore's just useless, it's rusted fu' o' holes—
Indeed, the bairns have broke it wi' hacking at the coals.

The rheumatiz is in my back—I canna tell how sair—
An' I got my death wi' driving the beasts to Hallow Fair.
I'm no the body that I was—ye ken I'm getting auld;
And as for lying out o' doors, the nights are dismal cauld!
Ye'll need a gude thick greatcoat 'gin ye're ganging up to sleep
In the bare and broken heather, 'mang the moorcocks and the sheep.
Ye'll find it's warmer lying, gif ye lie down heads and thraws,
Wi' the ither noble gentlemen that winna thole the laws.
I'm verra laith to lose ye, and so is Jenny here—
There's no a better liket man in ony parish near;
But gin the case is pressing, I wadna dare to say,
Ye'd better tak' a thought on't, and bide anither day.
'Twill be an unco comfort, when the nights are cauld and mirk,
To think that ye are chosen to suffer for the Kirk.
For me it's clean impossible—ye ken I'm auld and frail;
But surely, sir, afore ye gang, ye'll stop and taste our kail."

Now, glad should be our minister that he called at John Makgill's,
For cosily he kept the manse, and never took the hills.

THE END.